

PROPOSED LAKE ONTARIO NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting #5 - VIRTUAL

Thursday, September 17, 2020

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM EST.

Welcome – Bill Crist

Thanks for attending and representing your communities. Welcome John Armor, Director Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Matt Brookhart, Director, East Coast Region. Bill reviewed the agenda. There will not be a SAC meeting in October, but subcommittees will meet.

Ellen Brody introduced John and Matt, noting that it's important for the SAC to know how much support they provide.

John Armor

- Appreciates willingness of SAC members to volunteer in support of designation.
- Life as part of the ONMS System. Geography covers over 620,000 square miles from American Samoa to East Coast, Gulf and Great Lakes. Exciting to be expanding in the Great Lakes. National Marine Sanctuary Act (NMSA) is the underlying authorization to designate sanctuaries and operate SACs. John discussed the ONMS strategic plan, emphasizing that sanctuaries are means to a larger purpose – i.e., inspire communities to the benefits of healthy Great Lakes/ocean resources. Called out the seven core values of the strategic plan that underscore our philosophy about working with communities.
- The ONMS budget is about a \$50M program – relatively small – about the same as one national park. We get it done through community partnerships.
- Four pillars of the NMSA: resource protection, research and monitoring, education and outreach, and community engagement.
- Sanctuary Advisory Councils – about 450 council members across the system represent diverse interests – identify issues and solutions. Often other agencies will participate with our SACs because it's such a unique opportunity to bring together diverse interest groups. John thanked Bill and Katie for participating in the national SAC Chairs meeting last week.
- Infrastructure (visitor centers, vessels) – Acknowledged no infrastructure yet in the Lake Ontario communities, but the map shows where facilities exist throughout the system. ONMS also has a small boat fleet.
- NOAA as an agency brings so many services to communities. He called out the National Weather Service (NWS), National Centers for Coastal and Ocean Sciences (NCCOS), Coast Survey, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) etc, that we can call upon to support the sanctuary.

- Life under COVID-19. ONMS is not immune to challenges all communities face and all are unique. We've adapted to the virtual environment. But field work has been challenging- boats on water, buoys installed/maintained, diving, science. Adaptability is the key. John noted this is the 30th virtual SAC meeting across the program.
- Budget – FY20 budget \$55.5 ORF (operations, salaries, etc.) and \$3.0M for Procurement, Acquisition and Construction (PAC). FY21 President's budget is \$50M in ORF, but House Mark is \$58M. FY21 Pres Bud PAC is zero, but House requested \$4M. John presented a slide with historic ORF and PAC budgets – approximately a flat budget through time. Excited to be building three new boats in Olympic Coast NMS, Florida Keys NMS and Monterey Bay NMS.

Matt Brookhart

- Excited about the expansion of the sanctuary system. Of course it helps to protect resources, but it's also about the economic opportunity that protected areas bring to the Great Lakes and other coastal communities. New sites and expansions happen because of support from SACs and through the public process – the latter may take time. While we celebrate differences of sites, we're bound together by some of the commonalities of how we operate.
- Where is the system expanding? Matt showed a map and identified successful and unsuccessful nominations. Also, highlighted those currently under designation, including Wisconsin (WI) and Lake Ontario (LO). Wisconsin is nearly designated but hung up a bit by election year realities.
- Matt described the new sanctuaries – WI similar in scale and scope of LO – about the conservation of deep, freshwater shipwrecks, but also about recreation and tourism. Florida Keys is very different from LO from a resource perspective, but the SAC has been critical for re-tooling the management system there. At Flower Garden Banks, NOAA is proposing 14 new banks in the middle of the oil industry - that SAC is critical to defining and helping to describe solutions. At Monitor, Graveyard of the Atlantic – the first of its kind – a marine battlefield – WWII – also about the story of the Merchant Mariners – this proposal is currently caught up in the election cycle, but it's an incredibly strong proposal. Matt hopes you can see LO is part of a larger system and should consider how you can draw upon the system to support LO.
- **Question and Answers:**
 - Dale Currier: Is there any implication of election year politics in NY on LO designation? Matt – we don't know, but likely no. We remain hopeful and patience is key. John agrees with Matt
 - Jeanie Gleisner: Can this program and site contribute to the story of the Underground Railroad? John – yes, the entire story of people at each of these places through time is significant – he asks that the SAC help identify communities and stories and how best to reflect in management and interpretation. Matt – struck by the history of this place as reflected by its cultural landscape and how to interpret. The site isn't just about shipwrecks.
 - Ed Mervine: With flat budgets, is there less money for each sanctuary? John – an interesting question, but not necessarily how budget history plays out explicitly. More people that we can bring into the system, the more resources potentially become available. Prior to Mallows Bay-Potomac NMS, it had been 20 years since we've been able to broaden interest and engagement, especially at Congressional levels. Matt – when new sites have been added to the system, the sanctuary budget has increased. We are hoping the same will be true going forward. Worth noting that a flat budget over time is better than many other programs.

- At what point does the Congressional delegation get involved? John – the NY delegation has been involved already and will continue to evolve closer to designation. Matt – acknowledges the importance of Mike Snyder and state partnership to work with the delegation and the Governor’s Office.
- Any guess on when designation will happen? Matt – difficult to say, but the LO team has moved the process forward at a rapid pace. There’s no reason that LO can’t be designated quickly, but there are always external factors, especially when the designation documents leave our hands through clearance.
- Mike Snyder: Feels fortunate to have first-hand experience with the sanctuary program and truly appreciates their commitment to community and co-management with the state. He says the leadership of the sanctuary system at the local level matters. Alongside the local community leaders, this designation will happen, it’s just a timing issue.
- Ellen – thanks to John and Matt – all SAC members should feel free to reach out to them.
- John – on behalf of the entire sanctuary system, our sincere thanks for what you are doing.

Bill Crist – Update

- Report on meetings
 - Meeting with Mike Snyder (DOS) and Daniel Mackay (Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation) – both are very supportive. Katie – take-away message is that the process is locally driven.
 - National SAC Chairs call – it lasted almost three hours, lots of enthusiasm. Important to note the sense of being part of the family and that other sites are supporting LO. Interesting to hear about differences from East Coast to Pacific – what they are looking ahead to and what we can aspire to be. Katie – inspired by community programs that we don’t have to reinvent, but we can find things that are uniquely us as appropriate. Also noted the pending 50th anniversary of the sanctuary system – a target for LO designation.

NOAA Updates (Ellen Brody)

- Ellen and Joe Hoyt had a meeting with the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation meeting. Good meeting. Primary concern by the Seaway agencies is the potential impact on vessel operations.
- St. Lawrence Seaway Pilots Association – Ellen reached out but no connection at this time.
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – continues to evolve but going well.

State Update (Mike Snyder)

- Mike reported on the recent NOAA/state agency meeting. Great participation from a number of state agencies. Began conversation about the relationship between state and federal authorities. Worth noting that all agencies participated and this will be important for designation. Follow ups – more comparing authorities, exploring enforcement including future Memorandum of Agreement, need to talk to the Department of Military and Naval Affairs due to their involvement in the Great Lakes, and thinking about co-management framework for State-Federal implementation. Mike thanked Bill and Katie for their leadership. SAC members are able to reach out to Mike at any time.
- Ellen – Impressed with the number of agencies and staff who participated – says so much about the state’s commitment to designation.

Government Representatives

- Phil Church – Thanks to everyone. The Local Government Council/Committee met – it's going well. Discussed including reps from St Lawrence County and the pros/cons of adding the county.

Shipwreck Presentation

- Joe Hoyt – shipwreck inventory underpins the designation documents. Working with the divers, shipwreck explorers and historians regarding what exists and user groups.
- Jim Kennard presented an overview of HMS *Ontario*: It is a British ship, Revolutionary War era – largest disaster/grave site on LO in which many lives were lost. Oldest shipwreck discovered in LO and oldest British warship in LO. This makes it one of the most historic ships (jewels) in North America that's been discovered. Jim has consulted with experts about if/how to include HMS *Ontario* in the sanctuary designation process. Biggest issue is about protection. It's relatively easy and inexpensive to send down an ROV to salvage/treasure hunt. Dive protection systems are relatively ineffective. Another concern is how to incorporate it within the boundary of the sanctuary without giving away the coordinates. Another concern is exposure due to other investigations/investigators - how can the ship be protected? No guarantee that designation happens, thus no guarantee of protection through National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The recommendation of experts is that HMS *Ontario* should not be considered in the initial sanctuary designation but rather later as an expansion. Jim supports the eventual inclusion of the HMS *Ontario* in the sanctuary. Bill Crist thanked Jim for the presentation and his concerns that we can consider going forward.
- Maddie Roth discussed the shipwreck database and map of resources for consideration of sanctuary boundaries. The St. Lawrence River is being considered because of the historic wrecks and resources.
- Dennis McCarthy – Thousand Islands (US side) of the St. Lawrence River. Shipwrecks are concentrated around navigational channels and they are close to shore (easily accessible – currently not really affecting diving but may need to be addressed in management plan). These wrecks are very concentrated geographically especially when compared to the remainder of the proposed sanctuary. Includes the oldest ship to sail (*L'Iroquois*, built in 1759) in the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. Lots of books written on diving on wrecks in the St. Lawrence River – documented more than 70 shipwrecks around Thousand Islands. Noted that bass fishers have technologies that find ships. In his presentation, Dennis described several vessels and their history, and several dive sites.
- Ken Kozin – Described charter dive boats – the season is short and demand is short thereafter. Five to eight operators on the St. Lawrence River. Also Canadian operators – they can run more passengers and used to carry the most divers. But since 2001, there are only 5-6 Canadian vessels. He described the Clayton Dive Club, which participates in river clean-ups. His view of SLR seaway differs from Dennis – he feels he can keep his divers safe, but he is concerned about pleasure boaters who endanger the divers. Education of the public is important.

Bill Crist

- Because of time, he suggested skipping old business and truncating the agenda topic of new business
- Bill - In person meetings – NOAA is not able to do this. However, we can come together for informal meet and greets. Dave – NY Sea Grant will host informal meet and greet on Sep 30 or Oct 1 from 430-630p and will follow all safety protocols. The venue will be In Oswego and will be held outdoors. Email will go out to SAC members.
- Katie – is working on organizing a beach clean-up in September or October. She is familiar with Deer Creek in Oswego so she will host a clean- up but encourages others in other areas to host as well. Oct 3rd or Oct 17th are targets. She will send out poll regarding availability in Oswego and interest in other locations
- Bill - The SAC was supposed to vote on a resolution regarding submittal of the Draft Management Plan to NOAA. Bill has heard that some are uncomfortable with some elements of the Draft Management Plan at the moment, but the momentum is appreciated by NOAA Sanctuaries. He, Katie, Ellen, Joe and others have discussed slowing down. Thus, the SAC will not vote on the resolution tonight but will pause to learn more. Bill wants to avoid splintering the SAC. Note that DMP submitted to NOAA is likely to change, as NOAA has other factors to consider and other NOAA staff to review the document. Katie – agrees with Bill and acknowledges the subcommittees can continue to refine in a positive way. Ellen – ONMS’ value system is to get it right – take the time for meaningful input. Joe H – agrees that taking extra time to ensure right rather than fast. Dale Carrier – would it be helpful for non-divers to do a 101 session to understand perspective? Bill – good idea – tonight’s presentations helped to introduce perspectives – it will help to break down silos across subcommittees. Still looking for fishing perspective.
- Ellen – Many comments in the chat box suggest that people are unclear postponing the resolution. Jim Kennard mentioned that he is concerned about including shipwrecks that are in the SRL channel and the liabilities.
- Rob – will information be shared with the council? – Bill – yes. Because we don’t have another meeting until November, we can spend time getting clarity among SAC members. Dennis – timely notes are important to understand context over time. Ellen – notes are being worked on as quickly as possible. Bill – all good at this point.

SAC comments

- Ray Tucker - Is a slide deck available for us to use? Katie – yes, I’m presenting to Rotary Club on Sep 30 and the slides will be available for use. Ray expressed his concern that the SAC is not voting on the DMP tonight. He understands the divers’ concerns, but sees the value of the sanctuary and the need to move forward.
- Dale Carrier – Agree with Ray, but by going slower we can go faster. Prudent to wait until the next meeting for SAC to review. Ellen said we will get together a draft and will expect that people will read it and be ready; she is fine with a vote in November. Bill – being open is important – we will slow down a bit; the NOAA team is supportive.

Public Comment (several on call)

- None

Bill Crist

- Next meeting November 18 or 19, Thursdays seem to work better, but please let him or Katie know preference.
- Katie will propose a beach clean-up date

Ellen Brody

- Great meeting. Long but lots of good information.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM EST.

Next meeting: Thursday, November 19, 2020.

Attendees:

NOAA/ONMS:

Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator
Eric Buck, Policy Analyst
Katie Denman, National Advisory Council Coordinator
Sophie Godfrey-McKee, Policy Analyst
Russ Green, Regional Coordinator
Joe Hoyt, National Maritime Heritage Coordinator
Jessica Kondel, Director, Policy & Planning Division
Edward Lindelof, Senior Policy Analyst
Richard Mannix, Attorney
Pam Orlando, LONMS Advisory Council Coordinator
Paul Orlando, Sanctuary Superintendent, MBPR
Madeline Roth, Maritime Archaeologist
Ryan Shea, Socioeconomic Analyst
Julia Snouck-Hurgronje, Senior Policy Analyst

Advisory Council:

Brad Broadwell, Alternate, Economic Development
Pamela Caraccioli, Alternate, Education
Philip Church, Member, Oswego County
Bill Crist, Member, Education (Chair)
Dale Currier, Member, Recreational Boating
Nathan Emmons, Alternate, City of Oswego
Peter Evans, Alternate, Tourism
Corey Fram, Member, Economic Development
Susan Gately, Alternate, Maritime History & Interpretation
Greg Gehrig, Member, Recreational Fishing

Jeanie Gleisner, Member, Economic Development
Robert Hagemann, Member, Jefferson County
Ben Heckethorn, Alternate, Education
Robert Humphrey, Member, Education
Jim Kennard, Member, Divers/Dive Clubs, Shipwreck Exploration
Ken Kozin, Alternate, Divers/Dive Clubs, Shipwreck Exploration
Stephen Lynch, Member, Cayuga County
Dennis McCarthy, Member, Maritime History & Interpretation
Kathi McCarthy, Alternate, Citizen-at-Large
Daniel Mackay, Alternate, New York State
Katie Malinowski, Member, Citizen-at-Large (Vice-Chair)
Jay Matteson, Member, Economic Development
Ed Mervine, Member, Shoreline Property Owner
Robert Morgan, Member, Citizen-at-Large
Mercedes Niess, Member, Maritime History & Interpretation
Rebecca Shuford, Alternate, New York Sea Grant
Mark Slosek, Alternate, Recreational Boating
Michael Snyder, Member, New York State
Amy Tressider, Member, Port of Oswego Authority
Ray Tucker, Alternate, Divers, Dive Clubs & Shipwreck Exploration
Dave Turner, Alternate, Oswego County
Jim Wieser, Member, Divers, Dive Clubs & Shipwreck Exploration
David White, Member, New York Sea Grant
Christine Worth, Alternate, Wayne County
Joseph Zarzynski, Alternate, Maritime History & Interpretation

Public:

Leah Feldman (NY State)
Colleen Galloway
David Granoff
Laura McLean (NY State)

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