

Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Attendance

BAC Members: Dave Bulthuis, Greg Jacoski, Maite Arce, Martin Peters, Sherry Rupert, Elissa Foster, Marie Fukudome, Taldi Harrison, Joost Ouendag, and Taishya Adams

ONMS Staff: Grace Bottitta-Williamson, Ellie Roberts, Jessica Kondel, John Armor, Kate Thompson, Katie Denman, Matt Stout, Michelle Burt, Vernon Smith, Brady Phillips, Mitchell Tartt, and Danielle Schwarzman

Member Roll Call: Katie Denman went through the BAC member roll call.

Director's Report:

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Director, John Armor, kicked the meeting off. He began by expressing his thanks and appreciation for the BAC members' commitment. John gave a high-level overview of some of the activities currently underway at ONMS including sanctuary expansions and new designations, expansion of the business recognition program, the upcoming 50th anniversary of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA), and improving and strengthening diversity across the system. He went on to give a history of the BAC, first established in 2013, some lessons learned from the previous version of this council, and what his hopes are for the future of this group. It is the hope that the BAC will help ONMS elevate sustainable recreation and tourism in sanctuaries, expand partnerships and become more relevant to the American public.

Member and ONMS Staff Introductions

The meeting then moved on to member introductions:

Conservation - Greg Jacoski & Elissa Foster

Tourism - Marie Fukudome & Joost Quendag

Recreational Fishing - Martine Peters & Dave Bulthuis

Recreation - Taldi Harrison & Jessica Turner (not present)

Inclusive Access - Taishya Adams & Maite Arce

Natural & Cultural Resource Management - Sherry Rupert

ONMS Staff also introduced themselves:

National Recreation and Tourism Coordinator - Grace Bottitta-Williamson

Special Assistant - Michelle Burt

Director, Policy and Planning Division - Jessica Kondel

National Outreach Coordinator - Brady Phillips

National External Affairs Coordinator - Ellie Roberts

Chief Economist - Danielle Schwarzmann

National Media Coordinator - Vernon Smith

Chief of Staff - Matt Stout

Chief Conservation Science Director - Mitchell Tartt

Chief Communications and Outreach Division - Kate Thompson

Business Advisory Council Overview and Member Roles (*Matt Stout*):

ONMS Chief of Staff welcomed new and returning members and presented on member roles and responsibilities. The presentation discussed the member packet, including charter and handbook. He gave an overview of the Advisory Council Handbook, a system-wide handbook which governs more than 400 primary and alternate advisory council members. The presentation moved on to review the BAC Charter. Two categories of member roles were discussed: the role of giving guidance to the ONMS Director and the role of serving as liaison between the private sector and ONMS.

The National SAC Coordinator (Katie Denman) took over to discuss general membership and operational information pertaining to serving on the BAC. There are 15 voting seats, 11 of which are currently filled; recruiting for the last four seats will begin in the coming months and will hopefully be filled by individuals with a marketing background. The official roles of Chair and Vice-Chair were laid out. Members can self-nominate or nominate others for official roles. All decisions must go through a vote, with a majority needed to carry a decision. If a member is not present during a vote, they can submit their vote to the Director before the meeting. Official positions are two-year terms and can be held for up to two consecutive terms. The Coordinator moved on to discuss the process and procedures for providing advice to ONMS, subcommittees and working groups. All information discussed can be found in the Handbook.

Break (12:35-12:40pm)

Recreation and Tourism in National Marine Sanctuaries:

Elevating Recreation and Tourism in National Marine Sanctuaries: A Path Forward

Socioeconomics (*Mitchell Tartt & Danielle Schwarzman*)

Recreation and Tourism (*Grace Bottitta-Williamson*)

ONMS' Chief Conservation Science Director and Chief Economist briefed attendees on conservation science for ONMS, a science and heritage division overview, socioeconomics in ONMS, recent and current socioeconomic studies, applications of economics, and some of the priorities for the next three years.

An issue based perspective is taken for conservation science - what science do we need and why? The goal of the division is to give people a good understanding of what the state of the resources in the sanctuaries are and what is changing. This information helps inform and create management plans. It was emphasized that sanctuaries are multiple use areas; management plans take into account lives, livelihoods, and resource use.

The overview of the science and heritage division touched on environmental science, economic and social sciences, cultural and maritime heritage, GIS and spatial data analysis and marine operations. The division is working to elevate the importance of cultural and maritime heritage and incorporate those aspects into all work across the system. In-house marine operations allow ONMS to have staff and partners involved in work on the water.

There was a pause in the presentation to allow for questions. There was a question for Greg Jakosi about his engagement with Steve Gittings, invasive lionfish, and the Guy Harvey Foundation. Greg responded. He communicated that the lionfish issue is not going away and that there is still a lot to be done on the research side, including research below diver depth and harvesting applications.

ONMS' Chief Economist went on to discuss some of the economic work ONMS undertakes. She touched on valuations, studies pertaining to knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions, community profiles, and ecosystem services. The information gathered from these studies are used to inform communities, leadership, and management planning and to engage advisory councils. She went on to give examples of partnerships that have helped make these studies possible, discussing the importance of interacting with and understanding the communities of sites.

Recent and current studies include:

- SBNMS & CINMS - Wildlife viewing
- TBMNS - Visitor Center and Alpena glass bottom boats
- OCNMS - Recreation: visitation and intensity

- GRNMS - Knowledge, attitudes and perceptions, with a distinction between NMS users and non-users. This study was done in 2012, but the project is currently being updated.
- FKNMS - Snorkelers vs. SCUBA divers - expenditure quantifications
- SUCAR (Sanctuary Use Characterization, Assessment, and Research Program) - this program aims to quantify visitation rates and characterizes uses, identifies cultural heritage practices and culturally significant features, estimates expenditures and resulting economic contributors, works to understand attitudes and perceptions of users and non-users, and develops socio-econ profiles of users and anon-users

Some suggestions were made for ONMS to work with the BAC on ideas such as SUCAR, activity specific research, community engagement access and environmental justice, and expand the scope and reach of Sanctuary Snapshots.

Break (1:30-1:35pm)

Recreation and Tourism (*Grace Bottitta-Williamson*)

ONMS' National Recreation and Tourism Coordinator began the session by introducing herself and the program with an overview of ongoing activities. A video of the Stellwagen Bank Whale Watching study was shown - the link to story and video was provided

(<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/news/dec20/whale-watching-in-stellwagen-bank.html>).

The Coordinator gave a high level overview of what a sanctuary is, went through the public photo submissions for the annual sanctuary photo contest (<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/photo-contest.html>), and went through the goals of an upcoming project, "Responsible Wildlife Viewing." She went on to discuss the ONMS Business Recognition Program (BRP). The BRP is currently only established in the Florida Keys (Blue Star operators <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bluestar/>), but there are plans to expand it to the entire system this year. The program is voluntary and targets dive, snorkel and charter fishing businesses, and helps raise awareness about the sanctuary.

Going forward, ONMS will look for input from the BAC on system wide recreation and tourism strategy, visitor use information and system wide BRP.

There was then time for questions. Taishya Adams (Outdoor Afro) brought up intersectionality and socioeconomic profiles. She wanted to know about the levels of intersectionality being analyzed/investigated by ONMS. The Chief Economist responded stating when study area profiles are developed they go to the census and pull from

existing governmental data; they are not running crosstabs on race and/or ethnicity with income. Taishya expressed that there is a growing need for deeper analysis, that the needs of low income minorities will be different from high income minorities and requested internal data that will allow for deeper analysis. The SUCAR program does collect socio demographic data that aligns with the way the census collects data and can therefore be used to look at different attitudes, perceptions and motivations as well. The SUCAR survey is in development now and should be cleared later this year. ONMS' Chief Conservation Science Director chimed in to add that besides the SUCAR survey itself, who ONMS partners with to implement the survey will be key. He listed some examples of groups who are already involved and asked to please let ONMS know if there are others the office should be connecting with. Taishya named Beyond Chicago: Why Am I Always Being Researched as an organization to be considered. The organization addresses ways to be equitable in research at all stages.

Public Comment:

Three people signed up in advance to give a public comment or question.

Greg Miller: Executive Director of CREST (Center for Responsible Travel). Greg agreed with Taishya's comments on intersectionality. He stated there is an opportunity with the new Biden administration to look to develop and engage tourism and travel strategy, as well as opportunities with climate change adaptability.

Thomas Ingram: President and CEO of Diving and Equipment Marketing Association (DEMA). Thomas gave DEMA's continuing support for ONMS and offered to continue to work with the office to provide data regarding consumers. ONMS has data DEMA is interested in having access to as well; Thomas asked where DEMA can access the diving data that was mentioned?

Danielle Schwarzmann addressed Thomas' question- for Gray's Reef and the Florida Keys - studies gathering that data are wrapping up. She said she'd be happy to set up a call to discuss the study and data with him. The study was done in partnership with West Virginia University. ONMS is expecting the final report later this year. Part of the study is looking at visitor use in northern Florida Keys and another is looking at specific diving use occurring, also in northern Florida Keys.

Greg Miller: a question for John Armor - one of the challenges everyone faces and a potential opportunity moving forward with the new administration is to break down silos that have been built up over the past few years. CREST is trying to find ways to integrate with the National Park Service better, how do we protect and integrate our

protection, in the long term, across agencies to benefit the US people? There is a potential for the pendulum to swing too much towards tourism once COVID subsides. How will you, John, reach out across agencies?

John Armor responded: There is no doubt that in the federal government there are different approaches to land and marine conservation. There are mechanisms in place to enable national and international coordination and to break down silos. The Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Center is one way to facilitate this for us. John offered to provide Greg with information on how ONMS is elevating the MPA Center and how the Center is working to break down silos.

Greg stated that he is interested in making sure his organization knows what ONMS' priorities are so that they can carry them forward and communicate them to the public.

Administrative Matters:

There were four topics for council input proposed: visitor engagement, inclusive access, communicating the value of sanctuaries, and stewardship. The floor was opened for initial questions and thoughts, but this will be an ongoing discussion.

It was proposed to hold council meetings quarterly. No council members objected. The National SAC Coordinator will follow up after this meeting to get specific dates that will work for council members.

Council members were asked to provide Katie Denman with any recommendations pertaining to filling the remaining vacant member seats, preferably with individuals with marketing experience. Council members were also asked to think about the officer roles and submit nominations for Chair and Vice Chair to Katie by **March 1, 2021**. An officer election should be held at the next council meeting, which will likely take place in April. There were no questions or comments following the administrative matters.

Closing Remarks (2:15pm):

ONMS Director, John Armor concluded the meeting with closing remarks. He thanked members, presenters and facilitators for their time. He emphasized the importance of doing a better job connecting people to the ocean and our program, especially in a more equitable way. ONMS, along with the BAC, will continue to push to make sure people understand how important these places are and how relevant they are to their day to day lives. It is important to have a better understanding of how to connect the current and future recreation and tourism industries to local economies and how to shine a light on the value of sanctuaries.



John closed by expressing his excitement to work with the BAC. He is available for feedback or for one-on-one discussions. If you'd like to set up a time to meet with John, please contact Michelle Burt (michelle.burt@noaa.gov).

Conclude (2:25pm)