

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary  
Advisory Council  
-December 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes-**

**Date: December 7, 2020**

**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Location: GoToMeetings Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting Attendees**

**NOAA:** John Armor, Matt Brookhart, Ellen Brody, Katie Denman, Stephanie Gandulla, Pam Orlando, Paul Orlando, Jean Prevo,

**SAC Members:** Eileen Abel, Lee De Cola, Jay Haigler, Daniel Hamilton, Bill Kilinski, Nicholas Kuttner, Eric Packard, Alan Miller, Maggie Ostdahl, Joanne Roland, Savannah Saunders, John Stefancik, Lucille Walker, Deanna Wheeler

**SAC Alternates:** Paco Blake, Susan Gerbasi, Maureen Hayes, Margo Jackson, Lolita Kiorpes, Taylor Schmitz, Anne Stark, William Utley, Sharee Williamson

**Government Agency and Tribe Members:** Paul Anderson, Mark Belton, Kelly Collins Choi, Mario Harley, Jeron Hayes, Elizabeth Hughes, Susan Langley, Eileen Minnick, Elizabeth Moore, Mel Proctor, LT Silvia Sigler

**Guests:** Bonnie Bick, Grace Bottitta-Williamson, Michelle Burt, George Clark, Thomasina Coates, Elizabeth Daly, James Fedorko, Martin Gary, John Hartline, Melanie Jackson, Gary Leyland, Dede Marx, Jaelon Moaney, Ellie Oldach, Elsie Picyk,, Sara Ramotnik, Hannah Schaeffer, Vernon Smith, Sammy Zambon, Erick Ziokovitz

**Media:** Ryan Volland, Southern Maryland News

**Welcome and Meeting Overview:**

Ellen Brody, Great Lakes Coordinator, started off the meeting with instructions for using GoToMeetings for asking questions and providing comments.

Sammy Orlando, Mallows Bay-Potomac NMS Superintendent, called the meeting to order and spoke about Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary (MPNMS).

For the past six years, Sammy has been NOAA's representative to a dedicated and spirited coalition of community champions and sanctuary partners to bring about the designation of the first national marine sanctuary in nearly 20 years. This sanctuary – jointly managed with the

State of Maryland and Charles County Maryland – was designated on Sep 3, 2019, almost exactly five years after the community-led nomination was submitted to NOAA. Two months later, on November 9, 2019, a community of 400 gathered at Mallows Bay Park to celebrate.

Designation of a national marine sanctuary is special – not only for what it is – but also for how it happens. It is, in fact, a testament to what’s possible through a shared vision of passionate and committed people and organizations. It’s also the product of extensive public engagement to continuously shape and mold the product along the way to designation.

Sanctuary designation is only the beginning of the story. There is work to do to engage the communities, whose perspective and values will continue to shape and reshape sanctuary programming.

Sammy introduced the staff members helping with the meeting, which included Jean Prevo, Ellen Brody, Stephanie Gandulla, Katie Denman and Pam Orlando.

**Opening Remarks - John Armor, Office of National Marine Sanctuary Director, and Matt Brookhart, Eastern Region Director**

John Armor thanked the council members for volunteering their time and talents to Mallows Bay and stated that the work we do in the sanctuary program could not be done without the advisory councils.

The sanctuary system encompasses over 600,000 square miles of ocean real estate. From American Samoa in the south Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes and now to our nation’s capital, it is an extraordinary system. One of the things John loves most about the system is the sanctuary workforce, which includes 350-360 very passionate, dedicated, talented, folks with lots of creativity and innovation. Another great thing about the sanctuary system is the diversity of the sites, South Pacific coral reefs to Great Lakes shipwrecks. The most relevant and the thing he appreciates most about the sanctuaries are our communities. The communities we serve are as diverse as our sites and as passionate as our workforce.

The advisory councils are part of a network that includes approximately 500 council members across the program. These members weigh in on a diversity of topics, from commercial fishing to oil and gas, to conservation, to education. The councils are key to making our system work, for a number of reasons, but most importantly the connection to communities. Because that is at the end of the day what makes the sanctuaries form of government so effective and so unique. That connection starts with the council members that provide real time advice to sanctuary managers like Sammy.

At a future meeting John Armor will be back to discuss other items in more detail, including the sanctuary program's upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The goals for the 50th Anniversary are:

Visibility – Nationally known for protecting America's underwater "parks"

Credibility – Global leader in ocean conservation and heritage preservation

Effectiveness – Designate more sanctuaries and enhance stewardship of existing sites

John plans to present more on this at a later meeting and looks forward to getting the council feedback and perspective.

Matt Brookhart, Director of the Eastern Region, also thanked and welcomed the MPNMS advisory council. Matt spoke about the growth that continues to happen in the sanctuary system, especially in our eastern region.

The existing national marine sanctuary network is already robust, but we are also in the process of expanding many of those sanctuaries and bringing new ones into the system. The sanctuary program believes these places are conserved for the purpose of bringing people to enjoy them and in doing that we are starting to gather some information on the economic returns that places like the Monterey Bay in California and Thunder Bay in Michigan bring to these communities and to the nation.

Matt is looking forward to the many opportunities on the horizon to work together to celebrate the uniqueness of this particular area and highlight what it represents to the Mallo Bay community, to the Chesapeake, to the Potomac River and to the greater DC metro area and beyond.

Matt showed a map of all of the different community based nominations that have been received for consideration for new national marine sanctuaries. Some have not come to fruition or been accepted by NOAA to meet our criteria but many have. Much of the action is occurring in our eastern region. That includes the Great Lakes, around and along the Atlantic seaboard and down around to the Gulf of Mexico. There are several different proposals that are either on our inventory being considered potentially for new designation or are in the process of designation. The proposals include an interesting mix of dynamic habitats, different dynamic resources, different demographics and even different congressional districts.

Right now, a site off of Wisconsin in Lake Michigan is very close to being designated the next sanctuary.

Ellen Brody has been instrumental in many of these proposed sites on the list. Right now she is serving as the lead on the designation process going on in the eastern part of New York on Lake Ontario.

Matt stressed that the advisory council is part of this bigger network, with some councils wrestling with and seeing some of the same issues and opportunities that Mallows Bay will see. There is strength, commonality and opportunity in that connection. The council is encouraged to reach out and communicate through the staff with some of those other councils.

Matt thanked the co-managing partners from the State of Maryland and Charles County.

We will have both John Armor and Matt Brookhart back at future meetings.

### **Sanctuary Advisory Council Introductions:**

Jean Prevo, MBNMS Advisory Council Coordinator, gave an overview of her role as the council coordinator.

As coordinator Jean provides direct support to the sanctuary superintendent, SAC Chair, Vice Chair and working groups. She will work with Sammy and the executive committee to organize the council meetings and plan the agendas. Jean is also responsible for making sure the council is in compliance with meeting protocols, keeping the SAC charter updated, providing detailed meeting minutes and passing along information to the council. As the coordinator, she is here to assist and support the council. Feel free to reach out to her any time with questions, comments or concerns.

Each council member was given the opportunity to introduce themselves, state their affiliation, where they are from and give a brief statement of why they wanted to be on the advisory council.

We are currently seeking member and alternate applications for the Youth seat. Not all sanctuaries have a Youth seat but we feel it is important to engage the youth in Mallows. Please help spread the word, with COVID and the restrictions over the last couple of months, it's been difficult to make connections with schools. Youth can also be recruited from other organizations such as girl scouts, boy scouts and sea scouts. Please reach out to any youth groups you may have connections to.

Applications for the Youth seat along with the Recreation, Business and Economic Development, and Tourism and Marketing alternates are all due by December 18. You can find more information on our website [www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac](http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac) or you can email Jean directly at [jean.prevo@noaa.gov](mailto:jean.prevo@noaa.gov).

### **Council Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Sanctuary Advisory Council was created through the authority of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act for the purpose of providing guidance to the Sanctuary Superintendent. As this sanctuary is co-managed with the State of Maryland and Charles County Maryland, that guidance is delivered to them simultaneously.

Some of the functions performed by the advisory council that help to inform that guidance are:

- Provide advice to NOAA on management, use, and protection of the sanctuary.
- Serve as a liaison between NOAA and communities and constituents.
- Identify potential partners and constituent groups for collaboration.
- Help identify and resolve issues involving the sanctuary.
- Review and provide input on sanctuary management plans.
- Assist in developing informed constituency.
- Provide technical expertise and supporting information.

The national advisory council handbook also defines primary and alternate members of the council. While we have to identify participants using these terms, we truly view the member/alternate pair as a team. There is strength in expanding both the number and diversity of perspectives expressed through the council. As such, both members and alternates are encouraged to attend all advisory council meetings, participate in informal gatherings of the advisory council, participate on workgroups defined by the advisory council, and engage with communities and constituents.

Members/alternates were paired in a way that helps to expand perspectives and opportunities as it relates to the function of that council seat. If you haven't already, we encourage you to reach out to your teammate. Likewise, for some seats, such as citizen-at-large or education, there are two members and two alternates. Please reach out to that expanded team. Remember that you are representing the community defined by your seat description but you also are a member of the full advisory council team and are able (and encouraged) to discuss and participate across thematic areas.

One distinction between members and alternates is that only the member is able to vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent. If the member is not available for that vote, the alternate would do so. Our hope is that the member/alternate teams are able to work collaboratively.

The national handbook also defines the role of the sanctuary advisory council chair and vice chair.

- Chair: Works with NOAA to set agenda, presides over meetings, signs correspondence, represents council's interest to the public
- Vice-Chair: Serves in absence of the chair, assists in performing executive duties of the council

Ultimately, the sanctuary advisory council self-selects the chair and vice chair. As this is our first meeting and many of you may be relatively new to one another, we need time – both formally

and informally – to get know each other. We have some ideas for that – we will discuss that at the end of this meeting. As such, the selection of chair and vice chair is something that we will not take on until later in the spring.

You have all been provided with a copy of the MPNMS advisory council charter. The charter is the mechanism to adapt the national framework specific to this sanctuary. The charter for this sanctuary followed the national guidance and was developed in consultation with the State of Maryland and Charles County. Some of the highlights:

- It defines the organization of this council, including the number and types of seats. The 15 seats and alternates listed in the document reflect the purpose for which the sanctuary was created – that is, for the protection and interpretation of maritime and cultural heritage resources. Also for community benefits related to recreation, tourism, economic development, education, science, fishing and citizens-at-large.
- It identifies the roles of the sanctuary co-managers – as well as those of adjacent government agencies with jurisdictional authority and Tribes pursuant to their ancestral lands. It also provides a space for a youth seat (less than 18 years old) to facilitate engagement and insights. This group is not part of the advisory council but they are encouraged to attend council meetings and can provide input as appropriate.
- MPNMS charter also describes council operations, meetings, and selection of a chair and vice-chair.

The charter is an extremely valuable document (and only 13 pages long). Please spend a little time reviewing it and refer back to it as needed.

### **Overview of MPNMS:**

Sammy gave an overview of Mallow's Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary to provide the council with a common foundation related to the basics of this particular national marine sanctuary.

The sanctuary is 18-square miles in the center of the Potomac River. It is situated exclusively in Maryland state waters. The sanctuary is jointly managed with the State of Maryland and Charles County Maryland.

The 18-square miles is roughly the boundary that was brought to NOAA by the original nominators, back in 2014. This boundary also happens to align with two different sources that validate the heritage significance of this area. Its significance is recognized by the National Register of Historic Places and its listing as a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The terms of designation are exclusive to maritime and cultural heritage resources, as well as to facilitate recreational access and economic opportunity.

Since designation the sanctuary has hired a superintendent, established an advisory council and in the process of conducting an infrastructure requirements study through a facility programming consultant firm. This is our attempt to try and harness what you know to be true about some of the potential needs at Malloys Bay Park, the surrounding area and any place that we think we connect the goal, the mission and opportunities of this sanctuary. Some of the things discussed during the study were – safety and security issues, recreational opportunities, education and science and tourism, but did it through the lens of the infrastructure to make this work. The sanctuary staff are in the process of working with this consultant and will be reporting back to the state and the county first and then to everybody more globally. This study is a starting point for discussion, some ideas are feasible, and some are not.

Lee De Cola - what are the major challenges facing the sanctuary?

Sammy – I don't know that we have any that I can point to that are immediate concerns for us. To a large degree I think the strength of how we got here really helped to bring along a diversity of perspectives. In a way that provides a benefit to the community with some of those qualities of life types of issues. In fact, we spent extensive amounts of time in consultation with groups where jurisdictions overlapped with the proposed and now designated sanctuary boundary. The Department of Navy in particular had lots of concerns about mission requirements but we were able to work through those. Potomac River Fisheries Commission was very clear about what their role is relative to the state of Maryland and the state of Virginia. I believe where we are is that we are talking with these groups about a potential to do things in a way that isn't adversarial but instead is beneficial.

Bill Kilinski – How often will we be having meetings? With the diverse locations of the members will they all be virtual or is there a thought about in person meetings down the road?

Sammy - This is the way of the future for NOAA for the foreseeable future. At least into the summer time or even into the fall. It does have its advantages, SAC meetings tend to move around geographically so this allows everyone to participate. Most councils meet 2 – 6 times per year, depending on the complexity of issues they may have to take on. Getting our council started may take a little more frequency in the beginning. We don't think the next formal meeting of this group will be until late January or early February. We will be proposing some informal meet and greet sessions to get to know each other in the next few weeks.

Lolita Kiorpes – Will there be smaller group meetings like different departments?

Sammy- I believe there will be, but that is up to the SAC to determine on their own. Once the SAC develops their own work plan, the council will look to see what kind of time and

horsepower needs to be put behind that project. Education, formal and informal, is huge for us and is at the top of our list. How the council engages to help us get there is your call. Work groups are definitely a possibility to make that happen.

**Public Comment:**

Jaelon Moaney – If I, or the Senator, may ever be of service as the SAC presses onward please feel free to contact me.

Sammy – we appreciate the support from Senator Van Hollen and all the congressional members that have offered support during the designation process.

Lee De Cola – I'm curious about what sounded like a 'turf' issue when Sammy referred to Maryland DNR's natural resource focus?

Sammy – There is no issue. Sanctuary was designed explicitly and deliberately around maritime and cultural heritage assets. All of the natural resources management of all types was left with the Maryland DNR and the Potomac Rivers Fisheries Commission. It's that black and white.

Commissioner Thomasina Coates - I don't have a question, but as the Commissioner in the district which this wonderful sanctuary or ghost fleets reside, thank you for all that you do and plan to do in the near future. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Sammy – Thank you Commissioner. We continue to appreciate your support and that of all of the Commissioners.

**Next Steps:**

Reminder – SAC Applications are being accepted through December 18 for four alternate positions – Business & Economic Development, Tourism and Marketing, and two in Recreation. We also have the member and alternate for the Youth seat. We appreciate your help getting out the word. Detailed information is on our website [www.santuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac](http://www.santuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac) or they can contact Jean directly at [jean.prevo@noaa.gov](mailto:jean.prevo@noaa.gov).

January 11 or January 13– we are looking at these two dates for possibly having a couple of informal get-togethers. Proposing an hour on both of these dates for what we are calling a “SAC Chat.” These chats would be completely optional, there is no agenda and we will not be conducting any formal SAC business. These are just a way for all of us to get to know each other a little better.

Late January/Early February- SAC Meeting. Jean will send out some more doodle polls with more evening times proposed.

Spring/Summer SAC Meetings – we will go forward with formal and informal meetings. During the formal meetings we will continue to talk about Sanctuary programs and partnerships. We want to get your ideas on some of this stuff. We would like to bring in some invited guests to speak with you. Incredible expert people around the program that would love to share with you and answer any questions you might have in regard to council operations or any kind of programming in the sanctuary. Of course, we will try to build out more time in the agenda to turn on cameras so we can hear your voices and get ideas as they relate to the management plan and sanctuary activities.

As part of those Spring/Summer meetings one of the core operations that we need to undertake is the voting on the chair and vice chair for this council. They will work alongside Sammy, Jean and the co-managers of the sanctuary.

No one knows what the next few months will look like. Your patience and flexibility and willingness to adapt with us, is so amazing and important and appreciated so thank you in advance.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.