

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- February 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: February 1, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: GoToMeetings Virtual Meeting

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Ellen Brody, Pam Orlando, Paul Orlando, Jean Prevo

SAC Members: Eileen Abel, Lee De Cola, Dan Hamilton, Bill Kilinski, Nicholas Kuttner, Alan Miller, Maggie Ost Dahl, Eric Packard, Joanne Roland, Savanna Saunders, John Stefancik, Lucille Walker, Deanna Wheeler

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

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Paul Anderson, Jeffrey Bossart, David Carpenter, Kelly Collins-Choi, Mario Harley, Eileen Minnick, Elizabeth Moore

Guests: Ellie Oldach

Media: Tim Wheeler, Bay Journal

WELCOME:

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

Jean reviewed the council agenda. The December 7, 2020, meeting minutes were approved by the council. If you missed them, these minutes are available on the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac/involved/meetings.html>.

SANCTUARY UPDATE – Sammy Orlando

Sammy provided some highlights and updates from NOAA, the state and the county.

We are closing in on one year with COVID. There have been many impacts over the course of the year. Virtual meetings is one of those consequences. NOAA will continue to operate in the virtual environment for the foreseeable future. The advisory council will also continue to operate in the virtual world.

Sammy stressed how important these advisory council meetings are. Council meetings are the conduit to the local communities and that two-way conduit is important.

Jean and Sammy have started meeting one-on-one with members and alternates and will continue to work through the list as quickly as they can. Many folks on the council are already familiar with NOAA and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) and the work that we do in partnership with all of the communities, but some are not. Therefore, the one-on-one calls have been very beneficial in helping bring everyone up to speed.

Sammy is feeling positive about some of the things that are happening with new administration. As we discussed during the first council meeting, our management plan for this council and community has an emphasis on environment, diversity and inclusion and 100% we get to showcase that in Mallows Bay. The wrecks are incredibly important from a historical perspective but it's really about the generations and generations that have been here a long time, long before the sanctuary. Excited to demonstrate this place, engaging them virtually is important to this group.

Appropriations are slow to roll out this year, but the sanctuary has started the ball rolling on programming investments. The infrastructure study is moving forward.

The informal SAC chats have also been quite successful. The more that we get to know you, know each other, the more we get to gel. This is the way to connect to people. We need to keep having interactions with each other. At any time please reach out to us with questions and comments.

SAC ADMINISTRATION – Jean Prevo

Jean reviewed the council roles and responsibilities. Some of the functions performed by the advisory council 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 council provides advice and recommendations to NOAA regarding the Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary (MPNMS). In addition to other topics, the council may provide advice to NOAA regarding the sanctuary's management plan; maritime heritage resources in the sanctuary; mechanisms for protecting sanctuary resources against existing and future threats; and community engagement strategies.

As council members you should be in contact with the groups you represent providing them information about Mallows Bay-Potomac NMS and also providing the sanctuary staff with any feedback you hear from those groups. Eventually the council will develop a work plan and then form working groups to assist the sanctuary with its goals as laid out in the Management Plan.

Jean spoke about the roles and responsibilities of the council chair and vice-chair. Terms of the chair and vice-chair are two years; the chair and vice-chair may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms if reelected. Being the chair is a bit of a time commitment. Some requirements of the chair are – working with Jean and Sammy to set the meeting agenda, running the meetings, signing any correspondence or resolutions that get passed by the council. The chair may also be asked to:

- Serve as a member on working groups and committees;
- Represent Mallows Bay- Potomac NMS at national meetings and virtual summits, where sometimes the chair is asked to present about the site or on a specific topic;
- Meet with the superintendent or other staff from time to time for updates, advice sessions, etc.;
- Write letters, memos, communication pieces to SAC members and others when necessary; and
- Volunteer or speak at sanctuary events.

The vice-chair serves in absence of chair, assists in performing executive duties of the council and also may be asked to attend special events or serve on working groups and committees.

At the next meeting we will hear from Carol Shafto who was the chair of Thunder Bay's SAC to give everyone a better idea of what being the chair is really like. We have also invited the chair and vice-chair of the Lake Ontario council to present. They will provide a different perspective than Carol because it is a newly established council. We thought it would be helpful to hear a few different perspectives so you can make an informed decision on whether you would like to take on the responsibility.

Reminder, that in order to be the chair or vice-chair you must be a council member, an alternate or non-voting member cannot serve in these roles.

If you are interested in one or both of these positions, you can reach out to Sammy or Jean anytime between now and the May meeting. Jean will be sending out a Google form and anyone interested in running for a position should fill out the form and submit it.

At the May meeting we will ask each candidate to give a short presentation. Depending on the number of nominees we will either vote during the meeting or do a virtual vote after the meeting. Our plan is to have the new executive council on board and running the June meeting.

Also a reminder that when it comes to voting, the voting will be done only by the members of the advisory council. However, it is strongly encouraged that the member and alternate to work together to make their selection.

2021 Meeting Dates – The dates for next three virtual meetings are:

Monday, March 15, 2021 – 6:00-8:00pm (EST)

Monday, May 3, 2021 – 6:00-8:00pm (EST)

Monday, June 14, 2021 – 6:00-8:00pm (EST)

SAC Chat Dates:

Monday, February 22, 2021 – 7:00pm (EST)

Wednesday, March 3, 2021 – 12:00pm (EST)

Jean will send out the annual meeting calendar for the remainder of 2021 after the dates have been finalized. Assume that the meetings are virtual unless otherwise noted.

The application period for the four open alternate positions (Recreation, Business and Economic Development and Tourism and Marketing) has ended and selections were made. The applications are being processed at ONMS and we hope to have the new members in place for the March meeting. There were no applications received for the youth seat, so we will re-advertise that when we open up the application period for the vacant Maritime Heritage seat.

There was a question about where to find the minutes from the December meeting? Those minutes along with the meeting slides are on the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac/involved/meetings.html> or you can email jean.prevo@noaa.gov if you would like a copy.

You should've received an email from Jean a couple of weeks ago that had a variety of links in it. Some really great stuff happening at the county level. During the informal sessions Jean and Sammy have been learning a lot of really good information from the council members. We are working on getting social media pages in order to get this information out more efficiently, but in the interim instead of sending each opportunity or link separately, we will compile them and send them out weekly.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION:

There are a lot of advantages to the world we are in right now. There are so many opportunities to connect with different communities via the cyber world, i.e. film fests, online lecture series, just to name a couple. If we had to pay to travel to these events it wouldn't be possible to connect to all of them.

During the past year, we have all learned that people value the great outdoors. Our friends at Charles County can affirm the fact that Mallows Bay is more popular now than it has ever been. People find the escape, the solitude, and safety in being out there, so visitation is quite large. As part of this virtual engagement, we have to ask ourselves why we are doing this. Are we just starting a dialog with people? Are we building relationships, and if so, that is absolutely wonderful. Are we trying to bring this place to their attention so they get a chance to experience this? Are we trying to get them to recognize that there is so much more to Mallows Bay than the ghost fleet that is out there because it is about the people, the maritime landscape of the area and the generations that have been there long before us and ways that we interact? We recognize that, we interpret that, we celebrate that. There are lots of different reasons why we would engage with folks.

We would like to take advantage of this virtual world and learn from the council if there are ways we should be connecting with the different community groups that you represent. What we would like to do with section of the meeting is to start a dialog with you. Recognizing that we have a limited amount of time, this is just the beginning of the discussion. We would like ideas of what we could be doing during and in between these council meetings.

Sammy encouraged everyone to use the chat box for ideas that may pop up as others are sharing their ideas.

The council members were called on in groups to provide feedback to the following questions:

- What are we trying to accomplish? Why engage?
- What do you think that constituent group might want to know about the sanctuary?
- What can we learn from them for better connecting?
- What are the venues and opportunities?

Group 1:

**Maritime Heritage & Cultural Heritage – Bill Utley, Margo Jackson,
Cultural Heritage – Lucille Walker, Sharee Williamson**

- Web talks/Webinars on different topics – Susan Langley recently did one on Maritime Heritage.
- Continuity of messaging is important.
- Develop a messaging plan for social media.
- Develop something similar to a prototype message for all groups to use for promotion at the same time to keep everyone on the same page. For example, “This month at Mallows Bay” or “Look forward to this at Mallows Bay.”
- Trying to use membership of organizations/partners already tied to for promotion and engagement on social media.

- Need to establish what we want to do as a group.
- Connect to children virtually in the neighboring counties and beyond. Teachers would love to have something virtually for their students.
- Film Festivals – Thunder Bay NMS just finished theirs where they had live panelist sessions, as well as films. Reached a very broad audience from around the world.
- TikTok might be a good way to reach out.
- Think big - there is no end to what you can do in this virtual world.
- Look for platforms that already exist. Many conferences, symposiums and summits are online, we could plug into some of those existing forums as panelists or even offer lunchtime presentations.
- The first question – what are we trying to accomplish is key.

Some of these ideas that were mentioned could be included in an advisory council work plan. We need to meet people where they are virtually. The sanctuary does not have a set of targets where people are, so it would be wonderful if this council could somehow organize some of those things for us. The council knows where some of these groups are and where to best reach them. A five minute introduction may be all we need.

Group 2:

Business and Economic Development – Alan Miller, George Anas, Dan Hamilton

Tourism and Marketing – Joanne Roland

- Reach out to get feedback to hear what people might want to know about Mallows Bay Park and the sanctuary.
- Sea Scouts and Boy Scouts would be a good group to connect with. When they do their overnight outings they are required to learn about where they are going.
- Marketing on Google images.
- Online kayaking and trail maps.
- Reach out to the different kayaking businesses that are charging for tours. Work together with them on marketing on Google images.
- Facebook, Instagram and YouTube pages are a big marketing opportunity. Share it with other organizations.
- Photo contests through Instagram is a way to get youth involved.
- Susan Langley's suggestion about sea shanties on TikTok was a good idea.
- Highway signs/signage.
- International networking (Japan), perhaps partnering with their embassies in Washington. Inviting these international visitors to Mallows Bay, which could then lead to economic development.
- Educating children is key. Kids go home and teach their parents.

- Need to be careful how we market during this virtual world so we can have balance when people are able to visit the park again. If we bring too many people, do we love the place to death? How do we balance that?
- Need to focus on what we want our messaging to be – climate change, heritage preservation, conservation?
- Organizations to connect with Coastal Conservation Association, Calvert Marine Museum and Chesapeake Biological Laboratory.

Group 3:

Recreation – Nick Kuttner, John Stefancik

Recreational Fishing – Eric Packard, Taylor Schmitz

Commercial Fishing – Bill Kilinski

- There are Charles County Mallows Bay Facebook and Instagram pages. Would also like to see the sanctuary or the council have their own page that could be posted on by council members.
- Use your own personal page to post about Mallows and share information.
- Could give talks about Mallows Bay to local fishing, kayak and birding clubs.
- Cross-promoting with the birding, boating and kayaking groups.
- More conversations about this are needed. Perhaps another forum, subcommittee or working group with council members from different seats.
- Congressional connections and open dialog with all groups.
- Could market Mallows Bay as one of the last places you can have an adventure.
- Fishing is the number one outdoor activity in North America. Need to network with national, local and regional organizations to put a spotlight on Mallows Bay. Networking creates exposure.
- Partner with the Mariners Museum in Newport News, VA.

Group 4:

Citizen-at-Large – Savanna Saunders, Anne Stark, Deanna Wheeler, Paco Blake

- Signage – signs would be useful if trying to get more people there.
- Balloon trash is an issue. Would like to see some outreach and education on their harmful effects.
- More information on the land around the bay.
- Lots of opportunities for engaging virtually and online with an active Nanjemoy list serve and active Facebook page.
- Community store is also very involved with the sanctuary and would like to promote and do merchandising. Could do a virtual talk from there.
- Consistency of messaging.

- Virtual field trips for students. Teachers are looking for those virtual outdoor experiences for students.
- Would like to see some other avenue for the council to share ideas other than email. For example a Facebook page that is only open to members. It would help to eliminate so much email traffic.

Group 5:

Education – Maggie Ostdahl, Susan Gerbasi, Eileen Abel, Lolita Kiorpes

Research, Science and Technology – Lee De Cola, Maureen Hayes

- How do we reach diverse communities?
- Need to figure out how to exploit scientific and research opportunities for students at multiple levels. Particularly how we can include technology in some of that.
- Drone analysis around the site could be useful for a virtual field trip.
- Links on the website for specific groups - birders, anglers, teachers, kayakers, etc.
- Need to think strategically about what virtual things we are doing because people are getting burned out.
- Think about ways of connecting to people that might already exist, like through a webcam.
- Find a way to highlight photographers or videographers and drone footage.
- Be deliberate with communication for tuning in to videos that are online but don't have to be watched during a certain time period.
- Connect with teachers and administrators to see the value of virtual fieldtrips. Getting students to become environment stewards. Educating children of all ages is really important.
- Weather webcam would be a good way to connect. There is an eagle cam at the park currently.
- Email connections are good because many people don't do social media. Maybe there is a better way of doing a group email.
- One way to connect with other science teachers in the county would be maybe to reach out directly to specific teachers instead of a broad ask. Then they may pass it along to someone they might think is interested.
- Reach out to diverse groups so they don't feel left out.
- Connect to younger audiences through Instagram – using polls, InstaStories with facts, Mallows Bay puzzle, etc. Ask them to tag and share with their friends to be entered into a prize drawing.

Chat Box Comments:

- I agree that we need to target the youth. They are really the future of the sanctuary. In essence, we need to proselytize and convert them. Obviously virtual is the way to go now, but I think we also need to look to the future when it will be possible to start doing

things in person. I know that there are a lot of historical and archaeological society groups in the state that are always looking for speakers. That would be one resource we could tap in to. Also, once we can get back in person, I think we could sponsor some youth archaeological days that didn't involve going in the water - there are enough sites on the shore or land that we could run small hands-on survey-style classes for school groups, for example.

- We will be able to reach a wider audience once things start to open up again.
- “Friends of” organization
- REI and Atlantic Kayaks give tours. Atlantic actually advertises in the County Community Services.
- Balance is a priority for the local community.
- From the water side, the shallowness and the danger posed by the wrecks helps keep out most motorized boats, thereby self-policing being overrun by recreational boaters. It also helps to keep the area for the canoes and kayaks.
- Snakehead fishing is definitely a Mallows -- win-win
- From an archaeological standpoint, the history of watermen and their craft is a big part of Maryland's heritage.
- Bass tournament at Smallwood SP in MD
- Working groups
- Hyperlocal tourism trend is a good point. Could consider putting a day trip itinerary together to promote that includes Mallows and other nearby recreational or historic sites.
- Current approved Bass Fishing tournaments, a few coming up in March/April out of Smallwood SP.

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/bass/tournaments.aspx?Paged=TRUE&p_Date1=20210612%2004%3a00%3a00&p_ID=612&PageFirstRow=100&&View={36E1EDF8-B882-4BC3-AA70-8826E828799C}

- If our efforts end up bringing more people to the park, then I do think there is a need to update the park infrastructure - but I assume that falls on the County.
- Because this is an outdoor park, our efforts virtually will directly impact the real world at the site itself. While we are educating the public we are also inviting them to the site, and that means that we are impacting the infrastructure.
- Here's a feature story from 2019: https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/mallows-shallows/?utm_source=ReviveOldPost&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ReviveOldPost&fbclid=IwAR0W1GpmbEerx0fB2i0ak-aTMIvuMcFP-0IcjhUY7v1cAkV9hkcb1JvvMU
- How about we start off with an Earth Day event!
- In Charles County, I am amazed by the POC on the rail trail-- definitely the majority. So things are changing.
- Quantico does have drone restrictions.
- Regarding drones - we used drones on the Potomac at Widewater to look at the wrecks there. I don't think it would be a problem.
- We were not allowed to use drones at Mallows when I had 100 4th graders there for a field trip.
- Regulations came in after that, but it is possible to obtain permission/permits and most operators know the ins and outs.

- I would think that the area impacted would be limited and as long as the operator stayed in the boundaries, they would approve that type request at Indian Head - especially since they are part and parcel of the effort.
- A web cam with the NOAA data from the buoy.
- Focus on stewardship messages!
- Indeed, since we have very limited law enforcement capabilities, instilling stewardship and respect for both the heritage and natural resources.
- Build a hulk on the shore for people to explore.
- A web cam at the site might pull double duty - working for LE also, especially if it is widely known the site is on web cams.
- We had one lined up for the osprey nest in season and to overlook the site the rest of the time but even with solar panels there's not enough power so back to our infrastructure needs.
- As content is added to the website, perhaps consider a 'community corner' that could feature community and partner perspectives on Mallows; I'm sure many of us and our networks would submit proposed blogs/photos/etc....and eventually any social media tools could essentially help solicit more content to populate
- A couple DNR connections/opportunities, DNR has an Aquatic Resources Education Division that does teacher training and student education: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/Pages/At-Home-Learning.aspx/>. Also, citizen science efforts through apps such as iNaturalist and MyCoast

Lots of great ideas, this is just the beginning. Let's keep the communication going. Reach out to others in your seats, as well as across the council to other members. Also, can see forming some working groups to dig into this deeper in the future.

We look forward to hearing more ideas from the non-voting government and tribe members at the next meeting.

Feel free to reach out to Jean or Sammy any time with comments or questions. They are always available.

SAC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS AND CHATBOX ITEMS:

John Stefancik shared a video link that was created at Chesapeake Bay Media and posted to their Facebook page (you do need to have a Facebook account to view it): <https://www.facebook.com/90673708060/videos/425248435041871>.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ellie Oldach used the chat box to introduce herself. "Hi all! Ellie Oldach here, tuning in from grad school in Davis, California (but born in Maryland, and a fan of the Potomac). I'm studying environmental governance, and it's great to sit in! Thanks for all your work."

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00. The next regular meeting is March 15 at 6:00pm.