

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- June 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: June 21, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: GoToMeetings Virtual Meeting

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Pam Orlando, Paul Orlando, Jean Prevo

SAC Members: Eileen Abel, Lee DeCola, Jay Haigler, Bill Kilinski, Nicholas Kuttner, Alan Miller, Maggie Ostdahl, Joanne Roland, Savannah Saunders, Taylor Schmitz, Lucille Walker, Deanna Wheeler

SAC Alternates: Maureen Hayes, Margo Jackson, Lolita Kiorpes, Sara Ramotnik, Anne Stark, William Utley, Sharee Williamson

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Mario Harley, Elizabeth Hughes, Susan Langley, Eileen Minnick, Silvia Sigler

Guests: Dede Marx, Ellie Oldach

Media: N/A

WELCOME & SAC BUSINESS:

Jean Prevo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Applications are now being accepted for the Maritime Archaeology and History member, Recreational Fishing alternate and the youth member and alternate. The application deadline is July 9, 2021.

Jean introduced SAC Chair Eileen Abel. Vice-Chair Dan Hamilton was unable to attend the meeting but sent his regrets. Jean gave a brief overview of how the meetings will run now that an executive committee has been established. Eileen will be running the meetings as we move forward.

Eileen thanked everyone for their confidence in her stepping into the chair role. She has been able to speak to about half of the council and over the next month or so is hoping to talk to the rest of the members. Everyone on the council has deep experience and incredible knowledge, she looks forward to hearing what you hope to bring to Mallows Bay. She is open to hearing any

recommendations that people might want to bring to the table or ways to engage everyone. This council is a shared responsibility and is for all of us.

Joanne Roland motioned to approve the May 3, 2021, meeting minutes. Maggie Ostdahl seconded and the meeting minutes were approved by the entire council. These minutes are available on the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac/involved/meetings.html>.

CAPITOL HILL OCEAN WEEK:

Sammy Orlando gave an overview of Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW). CHOW is an annual event that is hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation in Washington, DC. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit partner that supports the entire National Marine Sanctuary systems. This annual event started out as Capitol Hill Ocean Day and has grown into an entire week focused on ocean and great lakes issues. CHOW draws from a wealth of different partners that are all working toward conservation types of goals. It brings together a lot of politicals and their staffers. This year the event included three days of virtual panels that were focused on diversity, inclusion, equity and justice. These virtual sessions are still available for viewing online at capitolhilloceanweek.org.

During the event there was one limited in-person event, an evening gala. The gala normally includes an ocean award session and 500-600 people that purchase tickets to attend. This year the Foundation offered a very limited version of that. A few people on this council were invited by the Foundation to attend. Next year we are hoping to more directly involve Mallows and the people on this advisory council.

The council members that were invited to attend were Eileen Abel, Dan Hamilton, Maggie Ostdahl and Elizabeth Hughes. Sammy gave them each an opportunity to speak on their experience at the gala.

Maggie Ostdahl has been participating in CHOW for a few years. This was the second year that CHOW was virtual. The free virtual sessions give an opportunity to allow folks with busy schedules to jump on and listen in at their convenience. Maggie participated as an attendee this year and was able to listen to some very interesting discussions. She said it was the most diverse group of speakers she's seen at CHOW and plans to go to the website to listen to more and even re-listen to some of the sessions she attended. Maggie encouraged everyone to watch the recorded sessions, it's an excellent resource. The gala was very inspiring and a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about the work going on by so many people in so many regions.

Eileen Abel was unable to attend any of the sessions during the week but she did have the opportunity to attend the evening gala. She met two women from the World Wildlife Fund and had interesting conversations with them about their commitment to these larger causes, why they value them and how these things have shaped the way they think about their work. Dan

Hamilton was also there with his daughter. Great to meet people in person that have been working with on screen.

Sammy participated on one of the panels. Council member Jay Haigler also participated and provided some video. Francis Gray, Chairman of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, offered a very moving opening tribal blessing. Having the Mallows community participating in this event shines light on us and the things we are trying to do. We will continue to work on ways to invest in this event.

GETTING STARTED:

Get Into Your Sanctuary – August 7th Weekend. *Get Into Your Sanctuary* is a system wide event highlighting communities. There are a variety of events around the country which include things like fishing events, veterans groups, school groups, virtual and in-person events. Mallows Bay participated in this event prior to designation and called it “Get Into Mallows Bay.”

We are planning in person events this year in partnership with the Potomac Riverkeeper. The Riverkeeper will be doing two paddles on August 7 with stops at Mallows Bay. One in the morning with Susan Langley being the interpretive guide. That paddle tour is sold out. Then there will be a second paddle in the afternoon with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP.) Excited to be planning something that is in-person for *Get Into Your Sanctuary* day. Also excited for the partnership opportunities with Potomac Riverkeeper, through Susan Langley and the Maryland Historical Trust and with the NAACP. The paddle is the Riverkeeper’s event but we are able to be there and co-market the event. Please put this event on your calendar. It is a Saturday, but we hope you will consider coming out to the park to join the event.

Eileen proposed having an informal outdoor gathering at her house on August 7th after the paddle event at Mallows. This would be an opportunity just to talk, meet in person and share ideas. The council was all in favor of having this event. Jean and Eileen will send out more information as we get closer to the time.

The council discussed the opportunity for them to participate at Mallows Bay by having an informational table. The council liked the idea of gathering information from visitors to the park. A few examples of conversation starters were - Where are they coming from? What would they like to see at the park? What activities do they enjoy doing at the park? The council also discussed having a map where the guests could mark where they came from.

The following members signed up to volunteer at the event:

Maggie Ostdahl	Deanna Wheeler
Bill Utley	Lucille Walker
Sara Ramotnik	Sharee Williamson
Joanne Roland	Lolita Kiorpes

The council also discussed the best way to gather and share information with each other and with the public. Looking at perhaps having a Google folder where members can upload pictures and information and a folder for calendar events. This information could then be used by the staff for social media posts. The shared folders would be a good way to collect the information from events and visits to the park and then trickle out the information so we aren't posting all of it at once if there is a big weekend with lots going on. The staff would be able to spread it out throughout the week. The idea of creating a Mallows Bay specific hashtag was also mentioned.

These two items would be a good way to involve our council and engage the communities that we serve. Jean will be sending out a link to a Google folder for calendar and social media post ideas.

Alan Miller spoke about first aid and boating class opportunities for Mallows Bay volunteers and employees. He also asked about the possibility of Boy Scout camping activities being hosted at Mallows Bay? Would be good exposure for Mallows Bay.

Sammy said that safety and training elements are important to Mallows' mission and is very interested and excited for the opportunities Alan laid out. Not sure what degree we can put it together for this summer under the COVID restrictions, but we are all for basic safety being one of the priorities as we move forward.

Eileen Minnick from Charles County will follow up with Alan on the camping. Currently, there are no full-time staff at the park, just a couple part-time employees that help in the morning to get boaters in and out. They do receive first aid training. Eileen also would like to speak to Alan for more specifics ideas to help improve the parks already existing procedures.

Deanna Wheeler liked the idea of having safety training. She suggested having an hour of boater safety sessions every so often. She thinks it would be especially beneficial to the first timers at the park to help keep them safe.

Sammy suggested that Alan reach out Sylvia Sigler who is the United States Coast Guard representative on the council. When Sammy spoke to her previously, she had shared some similar public safety ideas she would like to see considered in that area.

Sammy is hiring contract staff that will be on board hopefully in August. This position would be a vessel operations coordinator. Trying to ensure public safety from our point of view. Working with the State, the County, the council and all the other partners that are down there. This person's major purpose are these things we have been talking about but can use the guidance the council can provide.

Alan Miller mentioned they have a former Coast Guard safety officer on staff at the Annapolis School of Seamanship who would be happy to help out if he can. Susan Langley mentioned that she is also an emergency first response instructor for AED, first aid and CPR. She also has an AED with her whenever she is at the park.

Safety issues are a heavy lift and we will eventually form a working group to address some of these items.

Eileen Abel suggested that the council familiarize themselves with the Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine sanctuary Management Plan. The plan can be found on the website <https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/docs/2019-mallows-bay-potomac-river-nms-designation-feis-fmp.pdf>. This will be a topic of discussion at future meetings.

SANCTUARY UPDATE:

Sammy provided a high level overview of sanctuary topics.

Riverpalooza/Piscataway Conoy Paddle - On June 5, 2021, Sammy participated in the Riverpalooza paddle event in partnership with the Piscataway Conoy at Mattawoman. The Chairman Francis Gray gave an incredible interpretive tour based on the heritage and the peoples of the river. His tour highlighted a different way of thinking about the river, the resources and the interconnectivity from a personal, environmental and spiritual perspective. Sammy envisions doing regular paddles similar to this at Mallows Bay.

Pride Paddle – A few staff members from the Office of National Marine Sanctuary in partnership with Atlantic Kayak hosted a paddle today (June 21) at Mallows Bay in celebration of June being Pride Month. There were 15-20 people in attendance. Sammy would like to continue to diversify how we think about using Mallows Bay and how we connect to it. Please keep these types of ideas in the back of your mind as we move forward and think about outreach.

Nick Kuttner said to check the Potomac Riverkeeper's website <https://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/> for future paddles. These types of guided tours expose you to the river in amazing ways.

Proposed Wisconsin-Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary – A Federal Register Notice will be posted this week announcing that Wisconsin-Shipwreck Coast is beginning the last 45-day countdown to becoming a sanctuary. The designation should be finished in mid-August.

Proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary – There will be a public comment period opening up for the proposed Lake Ontario site. This site is about two-thirds through the designation process with about a year left if all goes well. The public comment period will start in mid-July. We will have a Lake Ontario representative come speak to this council at a future

meeting. Many advisory council's supported the Mallows Bay designation and Sammy would like to see our council do the same for Lake Ontario. This group could actually pass a resolution if this group feels so moved, as to whether or not this group is in support. A letter of support from sanctuary advisory councils goes along way with the NOAA administration. We will probably talk about this again at the July SAC meeting. Not a heavy lift, but an important lift if you are so moved.

FY22 President's Budget – Sammy gave a short report about the budget process. The President just released his budget a few weeks ago which included a considerable increase to NOAA and the sanctuary program. Next the proposed budget will go through the House and Senate probably in late summer. We have no idea what to expect after they make their revisions but are hopeful that it will be in our favor.

Monitor NMS and Mallows Bay-Potomac NMS Joint Management – Recently, an email went out to the council from the Eastern Region's Director Matt Brookhart regarding a new management model. This model includes combining the oversight of Mallows Bay NMS with the Monitor NMS with Sammy taking the lead on jointly managing both sites. Both sanctuaries will continue to be autonomous. Sammy sees this as an opportunity that provides benefits to both sites. For one, we will have access to the Monitor staff and their partners. They have an incredible amount of expertise that can assist Mallows with some of the priorities we have been talking about. Currently, there is an acting superintendent at the Monitor that Sammy has been working with during the transition which will become official on July 18.

Eileen Abel suggested that we invite the Monitor staff to a meet and greet or to present at a meeting to learn more about them. Sammy agreed and said he would also like to see both advisory councils working together as we move forward.

Sammy offered the opportunity to Susan Langely and Eileen Minnick to share any state or county updates.

Eileen Minnick, Charles County Maryland - County is trying to support everything with Mallows and the budget cycle. Have also submitted some requests to local congressman and have received good feedback. After many years of requesting, they have received approval to hire a park assistant manager for Mallows Bay Park and Friendship Park in January 2022. Their staff currently covers seven parks so they are excited to get this position to help out.

The County has also started recording oral histories to gather stories about Mallows Bay and Charles County. They are in the very beginning stages of the project. Eileen asked that if you know anyone or speak to anyone in the area that has local history to please contact her. The shipwrecks got us here but there is so much more to this area and want to get it recorded before it's too late.

Eileen Abel mentioned that there is a staff member at the Southern Maryland Archive Center that is trained in doing oral histories. Maybe the County could tap into some of the College of Southern Maryland's resources to help with the project. Eileen Minnick said she will add it to the list. Right now they are using the county's audio video team to start gathering information and stories, but sees that there are so many levels to his project. These oral histories would be a great addition to a visitor center in the future.

Susan Langley, Maryland Historical Trust – Susan visited Mallows Bay Park a couple of weeks ago. She is hoping to connect with the new owners of Atlantic Kayak to pass along information about the importance of visitors not removing things off of the wrecks. That had been an issue in the past. The State of Virginia recently hired a state underwater archaeologist. He is interested in looking at the vessels in the James River. Susan is also working with an East Carolina University student.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ellie Oldach – Appreciates being able to sit in and hear what is going on in ocean and sanctuary protection.

Lucille Walker – The national heritage area is progressing. They were able to testify to congress last Tuesday and made sure to mention Mallows during the testimony since it is one of the key elements.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm. The next virtual meeting is **Monday, July 26, 2021 at 6:00pm.** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8695379272456527118>