

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary  
Advisory Council  
- October 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**

**Date: October 25, 2021**

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

**Location: Google Meet**

**Meeting Attendees**

**NOAA:** Grace Gottitta, Ellen Brody, Tane Casserley, David Dodsworth, Mark Losavio, Pam Orlando, Paul “Sammy” Orlando, Jean Prevo, Shannon Ricles

**SAC Members:** Eileen Abel, Lee DeCola, Jay Haigler, Dan Hamilton, Lolita Kiorpes, Nick Kuttner, Carolin McManus, Maggie Ost Dahl, Taylor Schmitz, John Stefancik, Lucille Walker

**SAC Alternates:** Susan Gerbasi, Bonnie Grady, Margo Jackson, Anne Stark, Ruth Toomey, Bill Utley

**Government Agency and Tribe Members:** Paul Anderson (State of VA), Philip Hager (MD DNR), Shaka Hill (USCG), Susan Langley (MD Dept of Planning), Elizabeth Moore (State of VA), Mel Proctor (Piscataway Conoy Tribe)

**Guests:** Ryan Abrahamsen, Brent Huber, Daniel O’Brien

**Media:** N/A

**WELCOME & SAC BUSINESS:**

Eileen Abel welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Lucille Walker motioned to approve the September 13, 2021, meeting minutes. Dan Hamilton 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>.

Eileen Minnick has retired from Charles County. She will be greatly missed. She's done great service for the SAC and has been a great partner. The new Charles County representative will be introduced at our next council meeting

Carolin McManus is joining the council as the Maritime Archaeology & History representative. Carolin is a professor at the college of Southern Maryland where she teaches a variety of classes, including English, cultural studies and communication. Carolin spoke about her background and some projects she’s been working on in the Potomac River.

Eileen announced a meeting agenda change adding Brent Hubert from Charles County Media right after Dan's presentation on the Thunder Bay SAC meeting. There were no objections to the agenda modification.

### **SAC CHAIRS MEETING REPORT:**

**Director's Report** - Eileen attended the Advisory Council Chair's meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The meeting included a report from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Director, John Armor. During his report he spoke about the FY22 budget which is looking very good for sanctuaries. There had originally been some monies that were identified in the original infrastructure bill, not sure right now what that looks like with some of the infrastructure cuts, but it is still believed that the budget overall will support the sanctuaries.

John Armor also talked a little bit about the sanctuaries' involvement with Executive Order 14008, specifically the section called Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful. One of the intentions is to grow the National Marine Sanctuary system and to really focus on the value of community-based processes to designate and support those sanctuaries with advisory councils. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries also plans to support actions related to climate justice, diversity and inclusion, and to hearing indigenous voices across all of the work of the marine sanctuaries.

**Business Advisory Council** – Taishya Adams vice-president of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) presented to the chairs. The BAC is an organization that seeks to encourage engagement with business, particularly with diverse entities to enhance the mission of the National Marine Sanctuaries. Eileen has a follow up meeting with Taishya in November to talk about some opportunities for our advisory council and maybe some activities at Mallows Bay, where we can do some things around paddling citizen science efforts. Particularly talking about equitable experiences, trying to grow some STEM pipelines and what we might be able to do to celebrate black history month. Eileen will follow up with council to get people involved with some of her ideas moving forward.

**ONMS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign** – The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 23, 2022 and just launched the “Save Spectacular” campaign to celebrate and raise awareness about the sanctuaries.

The “Save Spectacular” video was shown during the meeting and also sent out earlier this week in an email from Jean. The video features scenes from Mallows Bay at the beginning and at the end. If you missed it the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULLhPbvoTYs>. Please share this video with your constituents.

Stay tuned for activities and branding opportunities that we can participate in during the “Save Spectacular” campaign.

**Compatibility of Renewable Energy and National Marine Sanctuaries** – There was conversation about the push by this current administration for renewable energy and how some of the sanctuaries will be impacted by the push for renewable energy, especially around windfarms. The group discussed how the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will work to ensure that windfarms are carefully considered around the areas of marine sanctuaries because frequently they may not be compatible with our mission, particularly those that are offshore and that may be damaging to wildlife. Eileen said it was an interesting conversation about recognizing the need for growing renewable and at the same time, making sure that there is a very robust conversation around the compatibility of that effort and the mission of the marine sanctuaries.

**ONMS Sentinel Sites:**

The last thing they spoke about at the chairs meeting was sentinel sites. This is a program and process in which the ONMS works to empower sanctuaries to use research and to help identify key issues around unique challenges that the sanctuaries face and that can then help the ONMS prioritize budgets and maybe look at key issues that are facing the sanctuaries nationwide. Mallows already does a lot of research and it is also a unique location, not just because of the ships, but because it is so close to the capitol. This proximity provides an opportunity to show off the structures, ecosystems and habitat in a way that we can talk about how the sanctuary is an indicator itself in the effects of climate change. There may be an opportunity for Mallows to be designated a sentinel site in the future.

Tane Casserley has been involved with the working groups for climate research and spoke about the opportunity for Mallows to engage as a sentinel site. Tane would like to see every sanctuary be designated as a sentinel site.

The SAC chairs meeting notes were emailed to everyone so you can review them if you would like more detailed information

**THUNDER BAY SAC MEETING OVERVIEW:**

Dan Hamilton and Eileen Abel had the opportunity to sit in on the September Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting. Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 2000 to protect a nationally significant collection of nearly 100 historic shipwrecks in Lake Huron off the Michigan coast. Dan was impressed the infrastructure there, which includes a visitor center with roof top deck, diving and marine technology center, research boat and tour boat. They are also a sentinel site. Their advisory council has been in place for two decades. Due to COVID the council has only met a few times this year. The meeting focused mostly on the research that had been conducted during the 2021 field season. Thunder Bay is a sanctuary focused on shipwrecks but also partners with other agencies to do scientific

research. Some of the agencies they worked with in 2021 were Ocean Exploration Trust, University of Michigan, University of New Hampshire, University of North Carolina Wilmington and the U.S. Coast Guard. They also worked with Grand Valley State University on a project with a German research group.

Thunder Bay has a mooring buoy program that marks the shipwrecks for recreational divers. The NOAA facilities are all closed due to COVID but the diving areas are open.

It was interesting to hear about a sanctuary that has been operational for 20+ years. There is definitely a strong focus on education and outreach, along with the scientific research. Mallows Bay is just starting out so it was fun to hear about all the possibilities that could happen in the future.

Eileen Abel suggested a council trip to visit the Monitor NMS when things open up to meet the staff and see the projects going on there. Understanding more of what other sanctuaries are doing provides us with insight on the kinds of things we want to do in the future and inspires more conversations on what we do and how we do it.

It was suggested that Mallows affiliated partners give presentations on research they are doing or participate in a webinar series.

#### **CHARLES COUNTY MEDIA – Brent Huber**

Brent is the lead producer for Charles County Government Television. He is a Potomac River native. As the lead producer he provides videos and content to the station. Brent requested a copy of the “Save Spectacular” video so he can air it on the station.

Brent has been working with Sammy on a project that will tell the story of Mallows Bay history and how it connects to the people. Brent is looking for the council to provide him with connections to people that may be able to help tell that story. Brent does have a few contacts in Nanjemoy but would appreciate any insight, names or guidance the council could provide. If you know of anyone or if you have a story you would like to share please reach out to Jean, Sammy or even Brent directly. His email is [huberb@charlescountymd.gov](mailto:huberb@charlescountymd.gov).

Wanting to expand this program significantly. If you have a network out there, please help spread the word. Sammy would really like to get these stories on film. Think broadly, longtime watermen and families that have been there for generations, Department of Defense, the Navy and other history that goes beyond WWI and the Ghost Fleet.

Carolin McManus put the name Don Shomette in the chat box. Don has published dozens of books, knows the deep history and has access to historical images. Dan Hamilton suggested Jonathan McKnight, Associate Director of Maryland DNR Wildlife and Heritage, he was with

the program Open Space when DNR bought the property. Dan will email Brent his contact information.

Lolita asked if they were interested in more current perspectives from students that have recently visited Mallows? Brent would like to see the story told from all perspectives from as far back as they can get it, to yesterday. Lolita will provide Brent with some names before her students graduate.

Lee DeCola thinks we should be talking more in terms of the regional geography of the area and thinking of involving people from the Virginia area.

Brent is planning on threading the historical timelines in with the personal stories. The videos are going to be more of a series. It will be cut in a long-form documentary but can be cut into shorter videos for kiosks, etc., that will be handed over to NOAA to use.

Jay Haigler asked if there was a timeframe for this project? Brent is looking to have some type of product delivered by April 2022.

Brent would prefer in person interviews but can also do them virtually if necessary.

### **TERRAIN 360:**

Terrain 360 is a company that was started in 2012 and was developed to create ultra-high resolution, 360° interactive trail maps similar to Google Street View. Sammy has been working with Ryan Abrahamsen from Terrain 360 to gather footage at Mallows Bay that can be used to create various types of interactive maps.

Ryan gave a demonstration using the video footage he collected during his visit to Mallows Bay last week. He spoke about the technologies used and opportunities available using this digital format.

Technology used to capture footage at Mallows Bay:

- 5 DSLR Cameras
- Computer automated
- High cadence (<10m)
- Full 360x180 panoramic images

Some of the areas Terrain 360 captured were:

- Boundaries of Mallows Bay NMS following the shoreline
- Wide Water State Park hiking and biking trails
- Mallows Bay Park in Charles County

There are many options for using the video captured by Terrain 360. YouTube videos, gallery images, audio voiceovers, supporting links and documents can all be embedded into the video.

Terrain 360 can create multi-layer maps, for example:

- High tide /low tide toggle
- Historical comparisons
- Climate change awareness
- Regional land trails

Points of interest examples:

- Historical
- Ecological
- Education
- Indigenous
- Fishing
- Tourism
- Public access

Dissemination Opportunities:

- Content rich digital tool
- Virtual reality
- App development
- Integration into partner websites

The Terrain 360 technology creates an experience. Sammy views this format as an opportunity for recreation, as well as an opportunity for the council members to become tour guides. Each council member represents different communities and perspectives. Sammy would like feedback from members on how they would tell the story of Mallows Bay? What perspective would you come from? Ecologist? Historian? Waterman? Scientist? So many options on how to tell the story of Mallows Bay. This is an opportunity to set recreation on a pathway that does much more than talk about the Ghost Fleet. Mallows Bay is really more than just the shipwrecks and ecologies, it is really about the peoples that have lived there.

The second part of this project is site characterization. Water quality samples, Drones, imagery, etc., these represent ways for us to document the sanctuary, as well as changes through time.

Third aspect is to talk about what this means in terms of tourism? What about having tools like this that can be presented at trade shows, fairs, etc.? How can we use this to promote tourism in ways that promote all of us?

This is the groundwork for something great, can be used in so many different ways. Basically, a foundation. Sammy is looking for the council to provide ideas for using this footage.

Sammy plans to have Ryan visit Mallows Bay at different times of the year to capture video of different ecology - the osprey, rice fields, and the marsh mallows plants.

Lolita Kiorpes – How much internet do you need to use that? In that area there may be a problem with bandwidth. Can you pair it down for different programs? Ryan – The program starts by loading the imagery in low resolution for lower bandwidth and then progressively loads a higher quality image. Should look pretty clear on 4g.

Bonnie Grady said she sees this as a great opportunity to send to all tourism agencies.

Elizabeth Moore would like to hear some indigenous voices talking about native use of resources.

Carolin McManus would love to see the camera going into the water.

Sammy is looking for council members to form working groups to begin working on some of the ideas talked about during this meeting. Please take some time to look at <https://www.terrain360.com/map/potomac-river/visual#11.96/38.44082/-77.29167>. We will be putting out a call to start getting volunteers for these groups. If you are interested please email [jean.prevo@noaa.gov](mailto:jean.prevo@noaa.gov).

Dan Hamilton - What is the timeline for editing and posting? Ryan - for this current iteration they have captured what they can for this season but are hoping to go back out in early spring to capture more. There is some minor editing that needs to be done but the current template is finished and can start to be built out.

Sammy does see this as a good winter time project for the early part of 2022 and would like to see an expanded prototype of one of these tours.

If you have questions for Ryan feel free to email him at [ryan@terrain360.com](mailto:ryan@terrain360.com).

#### **SANCTUARY UPDATE:**

Sammy gave a brief update on a few items that have happened recently and some upcoming projects.

Building off of the idea of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ideas “Save Spectacular,” other tangibles that are being bantered around is the reauthorization of the Marine Sanctuaries Act. It’s been 20 years since it was reauthorized.

As part of this, through our NMS Foundation we have been able to reconstitute the sanctuary bi-partisan caucus on Capitol Hill. Right now, there are over 30 members on both sides of the aisle. A lot of them have sanctuaries in their district but many don’t but they see the value that the

sanctuaries bring. This provides Mallows Bay which is only 30 miles away a chance to shine and tap into this important group.

The Senate's budget mark came out last week. So far it has looked very generous for the sanctuaries. The senate also wrote \$100,000 into an earmark. Earmarks were taken away a decade ago but there's a threat that they may be brought back. One of those earmarks would be for Mallows Bay NMS. Waiting to see the final results from the reconciliation between the House mark, President's mark and the House mark. We may get none of it and may be in a continuing resolution until this time next year, but the recognition of what sanctuaries bring to the communities are why these kinds of tangibles are what we want to be talking about for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It is also the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Monitor's* launch, battle and sinking. Great programs coming up for this year-long celebration. More details to follow at a future meeting.

During the past couple of weeks there has been some filming going on at the sanctuary. One of those filming groups was from Toronto. They were interested in the story of the Ghost Fleet and the sanctuary. This group intends to put out the film sometime in the summer as part of a series on major rivers throughout Canada and the U.S. This segment focuses on the Potomac River and talks to not only the ecology, it talks about the peoples and the economics. We will share more information as we know more.

Maryland Public TV came out to do a story on the sanctuary. They had originally done a story eight or nine years ago and wanted to do a redo now that Mallows has been designated a sanctuary. This piece will come out in January. We will give you a heads up when that one airs.

Dr. Jim Delgado former head of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' Maritime Heritage Program. He is involved with National Geographic series "*Drain the Ocean*". There is a strong likelihood that they will start filming one in the spring around Washington, DC, and the part of the Potomac River that includes Mallows Bay.

Sammy has had the opportunity to take some groups out to Mallows Bay since our last meeting. One of those groups was Blue Star Families. Their mission revolves around active service members and their families. Approximately 600,000 military families move and relocate every single year. Blue Star Families works to connect local families to each other and to their communities. Each year they hold a week-long event called "Welcome Week". They are planning to do the cornerstone event at Mallows Bay in September. This is a great opportunity for us to connect with a major constituency group, as well as other partners. We will provide more information as we get approval from the County and others that will be involved in this event.

As part of the Potomac Riverkeepers Riverpalooza, Sammy and the Potomac Riverkeeper hosted the leadership of four chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for a paddle. There are many opportunities to work with the NAACP and other underrepresented groups through STEAM programming and engagement. We could also host a Juneteenth celebration either at Mallows Bay or the surrounding communities.

Good things are happening and more good things will continue to happen.

There is a Monitor National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council virtual meeting on November 10 at 1:00pm. This is the first time the SAC has gotten together since February and since Sammy has taken over as superintendent. The meetings are open to the public so please feel free to sit in on the call.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Daniel O'Brien said he was just on the call to listen and be inspired.

Mark Losavio will send out the MP4 "Save Spectacular" video to anyone that is interested in using or sharing it. He also has other products such as screen backgrounds and posters. Please email [mark.losavio@noaa.gov](mailto:mark.losavio@noaa.gov) if you would like any of these products.

**SAC COMMENTS:**

Lee DeCola asked about Wide Water putting in a boat ramp? Paul Anderson said yes, Wide Water is putting a new boat ramp should be completed in August of next year. Lee threw out the idea of closing the motor boat ramp at Mallows because he thinks it is dangerous and there are other nearby boat ramps that could provide access.

**ADJOURN:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm. The next regular meeting is **Monday, December 6, 2021** at **6:00pm**.