

PROPOSED NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY IN HUDSON CANYON

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, April 2nd 2024

Fifth Meeting April- In-person

Attendees:

Agency Representatives (present)

LeAnn Hogan- Eastern Regional Coordinator
Ellen Brody- Eastern Regional Coordinator
Pam Orlando- Sanctuary Advisory Council
Coordinator, Lake Ontario
Matt Brookhart- Eastern Regional Director
Honey Stempka- Community Coordinator, Lake
Erie quadrangle
Alice Stratton- Marine Resources Management
Specilist

Council Members (present)

Meghan Lapp- Commercial Fishing
Greg DiDomenico- Commercial Fishing
Alan Lee- Recreational Fishing
John Depersenaire- Recreational Fishing
Mercer Brugler- Science and Research
Noah Chesnin- Conservation
Carl LoBue- Conservation
Raymond Fusco- Citizen at Large
Paul Collier- Citizen at Large
Chrissy Word- Education and Outreach
Lisa Breslof- Education and Outreach
Stephen Lyman- Marine Industry

Council Alternates (present)

Will Poston- Recreational Fishing
Judith Weis- Conservation
Peter Chaibongsai- Conservation
Rick Weber- Business and Economic
Development
Rik van Hemmen- Marine Industry
Ron Rapp- Marine Industry
Jim Kent- Education and Outreach
Martin Scanlon- Citizen at Large
Deane Lambros- Recreational Fishing
Rob Nixon- Tourism and Recreation

Government Non-voting (present)

Carly Bari- NMFS/ GARFO
Sarah McLaughlin- NMFS/ Atlantic HMS
Kevin Hassell- NJ DEP
Michelle Bachman- NEFMC
Mike Snyder- New York

Council Members (absent)

Kiera Maloney- Tourism and Recreation
Chris Lido- Education and Outreach
Andrew Minkiewicz- Commercial Fishing
Patrick Knapp- Commercial Fishing
John Dempsey- Marine Industry
Walter Golet- Science and Research
Brynn Heller- Citizen at Large
Cortney Worrall- Business and Economic
Development

I. Welcome and Overview of agenda

Meeting officially began at 10am ET at Monmouth University.

LeAnn Hogan opened the meeting and welcomed the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) members. LeAnn turned it over to Alan Lee for opening remarks and overview of the agenda.

Alan Lee: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our first in-person meeting of the Hudson Canyon Sanctuary Advisory Council. I'm Alan Lee, Chair of the Council, joined by Noah Chesnin, our Vice Chair. It's wonderful to see all of you here today, in person rather than on a screen. A big thank you to the dedicated staff who made this gathering possible. Reflecting on our journey since our inaugural virtual meeting less than a year ago in July 2023, it's incredible how much we've accomplished together.

Today, we have a packed agenda ahead of us, but I'm confident we'll continue our impactful work on this important cause. We have a diverse group of individuals representing various disciplines and government bodies, each bringing valuable perspectives to the table. Your participation, whether as a voting member or an alternate, is crucial, and we value your input.

As we move forward, transparency, respect, and informed decision-making will remain our guiding principles. We're committed to fostering a collaborative environment where every voice is heard, both in this room and online. Once again, welcome, and let's make today a positive and productive day. Special thanks to Tony McDonald for hosting us.

Tony McDonald: Thank you all for being here today. I'm Tony McDonald, Director of the Urban Coast Institute at Monmouth University. Before I delve into my role, I want to acknowledge that the land we're on has long been a site of exchange among Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Lenni Lenape. Monmouth University honors and respects these connections.

This conversation isn't new; it's been ongoing for quite some time. Individuals like Judy Weiss and Greg DiDomenico have been instrumental in advancing marine conservation efforts in our region. The establishment of the Frank Lautenberg Marine Conservation Zone is a testament to our collective commitment across disciplines and perspectives. Reflecting on my journey, I recall my involvement with the National Marine Sanctuaries program, which sparked my interest in ocean issues. Now, as Director of the Urban Coast Institute, our mission is to promote sustainable coexistence with our oceans, addressing issues like offshore wind and conservation within the context of community engagement.

I'm grateful to be part of this conversation and to collaborate with partners like Karl Vilacoba on initiatives such as the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal. Your work ahead is vital, and I commend you for the important task you have in the coming months. Once again, welcome to Monmouth University.

LeAnn Hogan: Throughout the meeting, we'll have designated times for public comments to ensure our focus remains on the Advisory Council's discussions. We will proceed with a demonstration of the Mid Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) by Karl Vilacoba. Later, we'll discuss updates on Hudson Canyon, beginning with insights from commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and the marine industry.

After a break, Alan and Noah will review the work done on the proposed sanctuary management plan, followed by another public comment session..

II. Updates and Agency Introductions

Matt Brookhart: Thank you all for joining us at Monmouth University's Urban Coast Institute. Your presence here means a lot to us, especially considering your busy schedules. It's refreshing to meet face-to-face rather than through a screen.

This marks the first in-person meeting of the Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, a significant milestone in our journey. Advisory councils like yours are crucial in guiding the designation process, bridging communities and advocating for marine sanctuaries' importance.

Before I delve into updates from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, I want to express gratitude. Special thanks to our dedicated team, including Pam Orlando, Alice Stratton, Ellen Brody, and LeAnn Hogan, who have been instrumental in driving this process forward. Their hard work deserves recognition.

I'm also thrilled to share some good news regarding the Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary designation. Despite challenges, our team's perseverance has paid off, and we've received final approval to complete the final Environmental Impact Statement. Ellen Brody and her team have been pivotal in this achievement. Keep an eye out for an official announcement soon, with hopes of completing the Lake Ontario sanctuary designation by summer. This success underscores the impact of our small but dedicated team and the importance of collaborative efforts in marine conservation.

I'd like to acknowledge Honey Stempka, our newest addition to the team, who will serve as the Community Coordinator for the Lake Erie designation in Pennsylvania. Having someone embedded in the community, like Honey, will greatly enhance our outreach efforts.

Moving on, I want to emphasize our ongoing efforts in federal appropriations. While there's growing recognition of the importance of national marine sanctuaries, we still require broader support in securing adequate funding. This is not just a Hudson Canyon issue but a system-wide challenge that requires collective action.

Thank you once again for joining us today. If you have any questions or need clarification on anything, please don't hesitate to ask. We're grateful for your presence and participation in advancing our marine sanctuary initiatives.

LeAnn Hogan: Virtual interactions are nice, but there's something special about being face-to-face. Shoutout to those joining us online as well. I'm LeAnn Hogan, Regional Operations Coordinator for the eastern region of the program, and I'm spearheading the designation for the Hudson Canyon sanctuary.

Ellen Brody: I'm a regional coordinator. I spend most of my efforts working on Great Lakes issues, but it's been very fun to dabble in the saltwater environments.

Alice Stratten: I'm an ecologist at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, focusing on permit coordination and resource protection policy. Recently, I've served as the SAC coordinator. Additionally, I've assisted the Eastern Region with designations and management plans.

Pam Orlando: I've been with the sanctuary program for over 20 years, which feels incredible. Currently, I'm collaborating with Ellen and our team on the Lake Ontario designation, offering some support for Hudson Canyon. I'll also be involved in the Lake Erie designation, serving as the Sanctuary Advisory Council coordinator for the Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary. Excited to meet everyone in person!

Honey Stempka: I'm the Community Coordinator for the Lake Erie quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary, just starting my seventh day with this team. My background includes work with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, where I helped establish the Office of Community Planning statewide. Prior to that, I served as the director of Erie County's Department of Planning and Community Development. I'm excited to learn about the sanctuary designation process and contribute to the Lake Erie quadrangle initiative.

LeAnn Hogan: We have two job updates that we would like to share. I'd like to announce that we'll be welcoming a new team member, Cait Clemmer, as our Hudson Canyon Community Engagement Specialist. She'll also serve as the SAC coordinator, joining us on April 22nd. Cait brings valuable experience as a marine conservation educator with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Her role will focus on engaging with the community in New York, and we're thrilled to have her on board. Additionally, we've recently closed the position of tribal engagement coordinator, with interviews scheduled in the coming weeks. This role will extend beyond Hudson Canyon to engage with tribes in the Great Lakes and eastern region, offering exciting opportunities for collaboration.

III. Sanctuary Advisory Council Member Introductions

LeAnn asks participants (members, alternates, non-voting officials) to present their name, affiliation, connection to the Hudson Canyon, one interesting fact about themselves, and one thing you would like to see with the sanctuary designation.

Commercial Fishing

Greg DiDomenico: I'm a voting member of the SAC, representing the commercial fishing industry. With 24 years of experience in commercial fishing advocacy, my roots trace back to Long Island and various fishing spots along the East Coast. While I lack a strong emotional tie to the Hudson Canyon, I'm deeply committed to supporting the livelihoods of those I represent. My interest lies in ensuring the sustainability and profitability of our fisheries while respecting the natural environment. On a personal note, I have a passion for gardening and self pollinating my zucchini plants with a paintbrush! As we navigate discussions about the sanctuary, I echo sentiments shared by others. COVID has highlighted the essential role various industries play in our lives, including commercial fishing. I believe in preserving historical uses of the sanctuary while fostering collaboration in education and research efforts.

Meghan Lapp: My name is Meghan Lapp, representing the commercial fishing industry on the SAC. I work for Sea Freeze, a commercial fishing company in Rhode Island. Our vessels operate in and around the Hudson Canyon, vital for our business and local community. As someone deeply involved in fisheries management, I emphasize the importance of preserving access for all current commercial fisheries and gear types in the area. On a personal note, I have a background in law and helped build fishing gear for NOAA research vessels. My experience extends to various advisory panels, providing a diverse perspective on marine issues. With the sanctuary designation, I aim to protect access for all fisheries while fostering collaboration in conservation efforts.

Recreational Fishing

Alan Lee: I represent the recreational fishing discipline and have the privilege of serving as the SAC chair, a role I never imagined myself in but am deeply honored to hold. My connection to the Hudson dates back to the 1970s when I started visiting as an angler and boat captain, operating a charter boat out of Manasquan Inlet, just south of where we're gathered today. I've had the pleasure of frequenting the Hudson ever since, learning invaluable insights from each of you throughout this process. I'm a proud doggy daddy to two yellow labs who occasionally make guest appearances during our virtual meetings. As for what I hope to see with the sanctuary designation, I can't help but feel a sense of nostalgia. With seven grandkids, I envision the Hudson as a cherished place for future generations to enjoy, just as I have. Preserving its beauty and significance would be a meaningful legacy to pass on.

John Depersenaire: I sit on one of the recreational seats and work for Viking Yacht Company in New Jersey. With over 2000 employees, we build boats designed for offshore recreational fishing, including the Hudson Canyon area. My connection to the Hudson Canyon began in high school when I worked on head boats and sport fish boats. The distinct smell and brilliant blue color of the water out there left a lasting impression on me. On a personal note, I enjoy surfing,

collecting old surfboards, and cooking for my family. I'm passionate about ensuring continued access to and enjoyment of the Hudson Canyon for all.

Deane Lambros: I am representing recreational fishing as an alternate. I've spent the early part of my adult career in the fishing industry and offer my expertise to help make the sanctuary even better. From a recreational perspective, I believe in open access and continued use for law-abiding citizens. No one should be restricted from enjoying fishing or accessing places they want to go.

Will Poston: I work for the American Sportfishing Guides Association, representing recreational fisheries conservation. While I haven't personally experienced the Hudson Canyon, I recognize the increasing interest in blue water fishing and want to ensure that fishery management remains strong. Despite battling seasickness, I've become obsessed with chasing tuna with spinning gear. I believe the sanctuary designation presents an opportunity to involve recreational anglers in data collection and citizen science efforts, which I'm excited to explore further.

Tourism and Recreation

Rob Nixon: I'm Rob Nixon, representing the recreation and tourism industries as an alternate for Kiera Maloney. Professionally, I'm the president of a lobbying firm in New Jersey, advocating for recreational boating and fishing for over 20 years. My connection to the Hudson Canyon stems from my passion for fishing and its significance to our community. An interesting fact about me is that I was once the first chair cellist in an orchestra. What I hope to see with the sanctuary designation is a focus on promoting and advocating for the area rather than restricting access. I want it to be a place future generations can enjoy.

Conservation

Noah Chesnin: I'm with the Wildlife Conservation Society, leading policy and outreach for the New York seascape program. It's thrilling to see the diverse perspectives gathered here today, working towards balanced ocean conservation and sustainable use in our region.

On a lighter note, I enjoy baking! Perhaps at a future meeting, I'll share some baked goods—I once catered my sister's wedding for 60 guests, a memorable experience. I find baking both relaxing and akin to managing long-term projects, with its step-by-step approach to success. Looking ahead, I'm eager to collaborate with each of you, exploring synergies in research, storytelling, and cultural exchange. New York's vibrant cultural scene offers endless opportunities to engage artists and creatives, inspiring the next generation of ocean advocates.

Carl Lobue: I am the Ocean Programs Director for The Nature Conservancy in New York, representing the conservation seat. I've studied fish larval transport and have had the privilege of fishing in the canyon. It's a special place that deserves thoughtful management, balancing traditional and evolving uses while preserving its ecological integrity.

Peter Chaibongsai: I serve as a conservation alternate for the SAC, representing the Billfish Foundation, where I've been for nearly 20 years as the Director of Conservation Programs. Our nonprofit ensures that recreational sport fishing has a voice in meetings like this, advocating for better data collection and management. Although I've lived in South Florida for three decades, I

grew up just a stone's throw away from here, New Jersey holds a special place in my heart. I'm passionate about defending its interests and cherish any chance to connect with like-minded individuals in the region. Regarding the sanctuary designation, I want to ensure that all interests, including recreational fishing, are given due consideration. I'm eager to collaborate to safeguard opportunities for future generations to enjoy fishing and marine activities in this area. That's our shared goal

Judith Weiss: I am a marine biologist from Rutgers University serving as the conservation alternate. My connection to the Hudson Canyon stems from my research on the Hudson River estuary, which directly feeds into the canyon. I'm passionate about raising awareness of this unique habitat and its importance to the local community.

Science and Research

Mercer Brugler: I'm a small little guy from South Carolina. I run an undergraduate marine biology program in Beaufort, South Carolina. We're in between Charleston and Hilton Head. My academic mission is to diversify Marine Science by recruiting and inspiring undergraduates from diverse backgrounds. I've been passionate about the Hudson Canyon since 2004 and have been giving public lectures about it since 2010, relocating to South Carolina in 2020. An interesting fact about me is that I have a remnant of a fish gill on the top of my ear, a reminder of our shared genetic heritage with fish. As for what I'd like to see, I envision dedicated research expeditions exploring the depths of the Hudson Canyon.

Business and Economic Development

Rick Weber: I'm from South Jersey Marina and tournaments, deeply rooted in a family business centered around offshore fishing for over 40 years. Initially, I opposed the idea of sanctuaries. However, after realizing the threats to our experiences out there, I've done a complete turnaround. Now, I firmly believe in the sanctuary process, aiming to protect what we have. One aspect I'm passionate about preserving is the breathtaking dark skies of the canyon at night, free from light pollution.

Marine Industry

Ron Rapp: I am representing the marine industry as an alternate. My experience with undersea telecommunications has brought me into contact with the fishing community, fostering my connection to the Hudson Canyon. As an avid sailor and conservationist, I hope to see the sanctuary designation elevate its presence to the level of national parks, promoting both conservation and awareness.

Stephenn Lyman: I am from the Maritime Association on the Port of New York and New Jersey. Advocating for safety and security in our shipping lanes, I see the importance of preserving the Hudson Canyon. My goal is to see it recognized and protected as a sanctuary, much like Central Jersey has gained recognition.

Rik van Hemmen: I am president of Martin and Ottaway, a marine engineering company dating back to 1875. We specialize in disaster management within the maritime industry. About 15-20

years ago, I became acquainted with National Marine Sanctuaries, advocating for proposals like the Sandy Hook National Marine Sanctuary. I'm passionate about these sanctuaries, viewing them as extensions of national parks. One thing I hope to see in sanctuary designations is the realization of the visions discussed here.

Education and Outreach

Chrissy Word: I am the Director of Education at the City Parks Foundation, overseeing programs across New York City parks, including the renowned Summer Stage. With roots in environmental education, my journey spans over two decades, from teaching on the Bronx River to coastal classroom initiatives in New York City. My passion lies in empowering young minds to embrace the beauty and importance of our waterways. Fun fact: My favorite sanctuary is the Guana Tolomato Matanzas sanctuary in Florida, reflecting my long standing support for sanctuaries. My hope is to see greater diversity in conversations like this, ensuring all voices are heard.

Lisa Breslof: I am president of the New York State Marine Education Association. From my early days in the Peace Corps in Chile to my recent retirement from the American Museum of Natural History, my career has centered on environmental education and advocacy, particularly focused on the Hudson River. One interesting tidbit about me: I'm an avid mahjong player, always seeking to keep my mind sharp. My vision for the Hudson Canyon is to integrate it into our collective consciousness, much like the awareness we have for other natural wonders like whales. It's about finding intersections and fostering understanding across communities to ensure the canyon's significance is widely recognized.

Jim Kent: I'm a geoscientist turned marketer working with Thornton Tomasetti on various projects, including bridge deconstruction and carbon footprint reduction initiatives. With a background in oceanography and a stint at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, I'm committed to effective communication, making complex topics like sanctuaries accessible to all. Fun fact: In college, I worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, honing my boat-handling skills in diverse water environments.

Citizen at Large

Paul Collier: I am a biologist and the mayor of Lower Alloways Creek Township in New Jersey. My connection to the Hudson Canyon stems from my childhood, as my father used to take me fishing there. I believe additional research in the area can improve our understanding and conservation efforts. I also advocate for more outreach to dispel misconceptions and fears surrounding the sanctuary designation.

Raymond Fusco: I am a citizen at large member, tasked with representing millions in the tri-state area. With a background in maritime consulting and policy, I've spent 16 years on the US Coast Guard Sector New York's harbor safety committee. On a personal note, I'm an avid paddler, having circumnavigated Manhattan over 50 times by kayak and paddled from Albany to New York City over 10 times. My hope for the sanctuary is that it gains recognition akin to

iconic landmarks like the Statue of Liberty or Broadway, becoming an essential part of the region's identity.

Martin Scanlon: While I serve as an alternate citizen at large, my extensive experience on various advisory panels, including the Take Reduction Team and the HMS advisory panel, provides me with a valuable perspective. I've spent significant time in and around the Hudson Canyon since the early 70s, totaling about 225 to 250 days per year. As President of the Blue Water Fishermen's Association, I advocate for sustainable fishing practices that benefit both the industry and the environment. An interesting fact about myself is that I've dedicated most of my life to the ocean, spending the majority of my days on the water since the 70s. Regarding the sanctuary designation, I emphasize the importance of preserving access for all fisheries while promoting the existing regulatory process. Rather than hindering access, the sanctuary should celebrate our successful conservation efforts and serve as a model for sustainable practices worldwide.

Government Non Voting

Michelle Bachman: I am a professional staffer at the New England Fishery Management Council. I have experience in fisheries regulations and habitat conservation, I've been involved in projects like the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. My background includes work on deep-sea coral habitats, including those in the Hudson Canyon. I'm excited about sanctuaries because they offer diverse avenues of exploration, fostering a more complete understanding of our natural and human systems. I look forward to the synergies and coordination among us to achieve positive outcomes.

Carly Bari: I am a policy analyst for the National Marine Fisheries Service. With extensive experience in fisheries management, I emphasize the importance of maintaining commercial and recreational fisheries within the sanctuary boundaries. Our goal is to ensure that all sanctuary actions align with existing policies, such as the Magnuson Stevens Act.

Kevin Hassell: I represent New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection. With over two decades of experience in coastal management and climate resilience planning, I focus on balancing environmental conservation with economic development. I advocate for greater awareness of the ecological and economic significance of unique environments like the Hudson Canyon.

Sarah McLaughlin: I am with NOAA Fisheries, focused on Atlantic highly migratory species management. Growing up landlocked in Albany, I spent hours in museums, fostering a deep appreciation for marine resources. I envision the sanctuary becoming an educational hub, highlighting its significance to stakeholders and visitors alike.

Mike Snyder: I am the Ocean Great Lakes Division Director at the New York State Department of State. My connection to the canyon mirrors Kevin Hassell from New Jersey, emphasizing regional cooperation on ocean issues. Personally, I'm a history buff and can't resist reading historical markers. As for the sanctuary, I echo the sentiments shared by others: I want it to be a model of sustainable use, inspiring New Yorkers and connecting them to our oceanic heritage.

My personal hope is that this designation continues to inspire all of us to make this special place even more recognized and cherished.

IV. Presentations

Karl Vilacoba from Monmouth University delivered a presentation on navigating the Mid Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) data portal. This was followed by a series of presentations led by advisory council members: the first by Meghan Lapp and Greg DiDomenico on Commercial Fishing; the second by Deane Lambros on Recreational Fishing; and the third by Stephen Lyman on the Marine Industry. Wrapping up the presentations, Noah Chesnin led a discussion of the proposed sanctuary management plan.

Commercial Fishing Presentation

Meghan Lapp: Commercial fishing in the Hudson Canyon area spans from Massachusetts to Virginia, managed by the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Office (GARFO). Vessels operating under federal fishing permits in the GARFO region have access from Canada to North Carolina. Despite the ocean's vastness, fishing faces stringent regulations, making it the seventh most regulated industry in the US. Compliance relies heavily on captains navigating spatial regulations, including Fishery Management Plans, gear specifications, habitat protections, and species quotas. These rules interact complexly, impacting fishing operations. For instance, overlaying offshore wind lease areas with existing regulations further limits fishing grounds. Proposed sanctuary boundaries add to these constraints, illustrating the shrinking access for commercial fishing. With conservation measures covering significant portions of exclusive economic zones, commercial fishing advocates stress the importance of preserving access amidst increasing spatial restrictions imposed by various ocean uses.

Greg DiDomenico: In preparing for this, Megan and I aimed to respect everyone's time and expertise around the table. The complexity of regulations, both onboard fishing vessels and shoreside, is burdensome. Compliance is crucial due to the serious consequences of infractions, such as permit revocation or hefty fines. While necessary for resource conservation, the level of regulation faced by commercial fishing is unparalleled, highlighting the seriousness of the industry's impact. Even within Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fisheries, regulatory burdens vary, underscoring the unique challenges faced by different sectors. Regarding the proposed sanctuary boundaries, questions arise about their necessity and alignment with existing regulations. Are such extensive boundaries justified by the features of Hudson Canyon? This uncertainty contributes to our reluctance to fully support the sanctuary proposal. We hope to spark further discussion on these issues.

Questions and Comments from the SAC Members:

Matt Brookhart: One point of clarification: the red box on the map currently represents the nominated boundary from WCS. However, it does not yet represent the proposed sanctuary boundary, as it will be released with the draft Environmental Impact Statement. For Greg, Meghan, and others who have commented on this, please note that the red box is part of the formal record that we are considering as we consider the proposed boundaries.

Noah Chesnin: I would like to emphasize that even WCS views the boundary in the nomination as an initial and proposed boundary from 2016. We recognize the opportunities to explore habitat, species, and biodiversity within the canyon and adjacent areas as a means to facilitate dialogue. Therefore, we are keen on engaging in discussions. Additionally, we do not utilize that map in our public-facing engagement. We are eagerly awaiting proposals from NOAA to respond to as they deem fit for each stakeholder.

Ray Fusco: So are the blue areas exclusion areas for commercial fishing? **Response:** It is referred to as the Scup Gear Restricted Area. It is only restricted for scup gear.

Ray Fusco: What does this sanctuary committee have to do and what kind of bearing do we have on the red boundary for this designation? Do we have any? **Response:** The Advisory Council's role concerning the boundaries involves reviewing them as part of the public review process. When the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) with proposed boundaries is released, NEPA mandates that it is open for public comment and review. During this period, you are part of the public and can provide input on the boundaries.

Martin Scanlon: I want to highlight an important aspect that hasn't been mentioned yet. When it comes to highly migratory species and protected species, it's crucial to consider our strategies for minimizing interactions. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Take Reduction Team and our mandates regarding highly migratory species, our top two tools for avoiding interactions with protected species are communication protocols and the ability to move to avoid these interactions. The first tool involves informing the fleet about any interactions with protected species and sharing methods to prevent such interactions. The second tool allows us to relocate to avoid unwanted encounters. However, implementing static closures in highly migratory species fisheries can actually hinder our ability to avoid these interactions and increase our impact on protected species. It's essential to remain mindful of this dynamic, especially in the context of highly migratory species fisheries.

Recreational Fishing Presentation

Deane Lambros: In representing recreational fishing, it's essential to understand that it's not just about individual anglers but involves a diverse community, including tackle shops, boatyards, and restaurants. Recreational fishing is a lifestyle, not just a hobby, which should be considered

when discussing regulations. The Hudson Canyon holds significant importance for recreational anglers, with various fishing methods and targeted species. Recreational users range from occasional do-it-yourself fishermen to charter boats, contributing significantly to the local economy through fuel, equipment, and ancillary expenses. Considering the economic and lifestyle aspects, any additional regulations should be carefully evaluated to ensure they promote productive and sustainable use of the Hudson Canyon while preserving access for future generations.

Questions and Comments from the SAC Members:

Judy Weiss: When you mentioned bottom fishing for squid and fish is that a trawl that grinds along the bottom? **Response:** No, everything I have talked about refers to rod and reel fishing.

Jim Kent: Could you provide some insights into the economic trends within this industry? Specifically, I'm interested in knowing if it has been stable, shrinking, or expanding over the past five to ten years. **Response:** At the wholesale manufacturer level, we've observed some consolidation among entities. However, on a one-on-one user case level, consolidation isn't as prevalent, but it's certainly increasing. Generally, with the stock market on the rise, there's been an uptick in fishing activity and purchases, including more fuel consumption. This trend has been consistent, with more users and boats being acquired, especially evident from 2020 onwards, likely influenced by the impact of COVID-19.

Ray Fusco: Is there a more comprehensive economic impact study available? For instance, if a captain goes out 25 times a year, how many captains are doing so? And how many passengers are involved? I'm curious about the true economic impact, including all the ancillary aspects such as food, restaurants, and tackle shops. **Response:** Yes, as part of our draft Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter Four delves into the affected environment, examining biological resources, socio-economics, and community profiles, including demographics.. I'd also like to mention The Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division's annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report, which provides valuable data on the socio-economics of the Atlantic HMS fishery, including fishing locations, vessel prices, revenues and more.

Meghan Lapp: Am I correct in understanding that the terms of designation for a sanctuary are subject to periodic review and potential changes in the future? **Response:** The terms of designation encompass several key aspects. Firstly, they specify the boundaries, providing specific coordinates. More importantly, they outline the activities subject to regulation. For instance, ocean dumping is a broad category included in the terms of designation, thereby subject to regulation. Conversely, if an activity like fishing is not listed, we lack the authority to regulate it under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. This does not preclude NOAA Fisheries from regulating fishing through other mechanisms, such as Magnuson, within the Hudson Canyon

area. However, to regulate fishing under the Sanctuaries Act, it must be included in the terms of designation. If not initially included, we must undergo a thorough process, including consultation, public review, and economic analysis, to amend the terms of designation. Even after designation, any changes require the same rigorous process. Regarding the boundary size, its significance is relative to the activities being managed and regulated. Thus, the inclusion or exclusion of activities like fishing can influence perceptions of boundary size and management scope.

Matt Brookhart: As a representative of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, I want to acknowledge and address your concerns. The statutory framework and established processes have effectively managed uncertainties over the past 50 years. If, in the future, there's a proposal to reconsider a fishery within the Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary, it would undergo a rigorous public proposal and review process. This process, mandated by the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, including section 304(a)(5), ensures that Councils have the opportunity to review and decide whether fishing regulations should fall under the Sanctuaries Act or the Magnuson Act. These safeguards, ingrained in our legislation, have historically proven effective and serve a vital purpose. Unless there's a significant overhaul of the Sanctuaries Act, which seems unlikely, these procedural steps remain intact.

Peter Chaibongsai: I'd like to extend my gratitude to Deane for his insightful presentation, particularly regarding the significant economic impact of recreational fishing. We've often discussed this at our foundation, emphasizing the multiplier effect that encompasses both direct and indirect costs. As we transition to a more formal process, particularly with Chapter Four, the inclusion of socioeconomic data becomes paramount. However, we've observed historical challenges with the reliability of some data analyzed by NOAA, including instances of bias or inaccuracy, even in recent years. Therefore, it's crucial to ensure the utilization of credible data sources. This prompts the question of which sources will be employed and evaluated. Will regional entities, such as those mentioned by Deane, which have conducted their own socio economic reports, be considered? Collaborating with these regional stakeholders could enhance the accuracy and robustness of the analysis, addressing concerns about past data reliability.

Response: We do have a dedicated socio-economic team led by our chief economist for the program. They spearhead the analysis in this area with a skilled team. Your suggestion to consider additional regional input is valuable, and I'll ensure it's passed along. Perhaps we can follow up on this after further consideration.

Rick Weber: I still share some of the concerns expressed from this side of the table. It's important to clarify that the individuals we're concerned about aren't present in this room; they're a generation removed. It's not that we lack trust in what you or your team is saying. It's more about the inevitable loss of control once boundaries are established. However, I want to emphasize that I believe you genuinely care about addressing these concerns. Regarding the

environmental impact assessment you're producing, although it might have been after your time at the HMS Division, there was a comprehensive study conducted on tournament anglers and the tournaments themselves. These reports might be relevant resources to consider.

Marine Industry Trade Presentation

Stephen Lyman: I'm From the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey. Our association, established in 1873, centralizes shipping activities and advocates for the maritime industry. Regarding vessel activity, we monitor transit counts and types of vessels for the Port of New York and New Jersey, including bulk carriers, containers, tankers, and passenger carriers. We also track changes in vessel stats over time. Routing measures, such as safety fairways and traffic separation schemes, are crucial for balancing vessel traffic and minimizing risks. We're currently reviewing proposed changes to shipping safety fairways to accommodate offshore wind lease areas and ensure safety for vessels. In conclusion, maritime trade is vital for transporting goods efficiently, and safety remains a top priority. We're committed to collaborating with stakeholders to address the challenges of increased ocean activity and ensure the sustainable use of marine resources. With the growing complexity of ocean use, we're committed to finding collaborative solutions to ensure safe and efficient maritime operations.

Questions and Comments from the SAC Members:

Greg DiDomenico: When you have to slow down, what does it cost you per hour? **Response:** I do not operate a vessel, so I can't provide a direct answer to your question. However, there are traffic schemes in place where vessels are required to reduce speed. These designated areas are predetermined, and vessels are aware in advance that they need to slow down within those specific zones.

Greg DiDomenico: I would imagine that navigating in and out of certain ports, especially under bridges and considering factors like high and low tide, is a significant concern for your members. Is that indeed the case? **Response:** There's an excellent product within NOAA's ports system that provides information on air draft and water levels, crucial for navigating under bridges. Regarding the recent incident in Baltimore involving commercial maritime, I can't comment further as it's still under investigation. However, if you're interested in discussing the associated costs, I'm available to provide insights.

Rick Weber: You've presented us with a busy map, and I'm curious about the separation zones depicted. Are those managed by the Department of Commerce or the Department of the Interior, or is it NOAA handling the traffic separation zones? It seems like a distinct entity altogether. I'm interested in understanding how new traffic separation zone proposals intersect with sanctuary designations. How does the sanctuary process influence the roles of the Coast Guard and

Homeland Security? Does the Interior Department take precedence over other agencies, or does the sanctuary designation hold its ground? **Response:** Regarding the process, I want to highlight an important development with the US Coast Guard. In their scoping comment letter, they proposed a traffic separation scheme and expressed interest in being a cooperating agency on our NEPA document. We've accepted their request, and the coordination process has begun. This collaboration ensures transparency in the NEPA process, aligning our proposed boundaries with their traffic separation scheme. It's a crucial step towards working together effectively.

Matt Brookhart: I just want to emphasize that the compatibility between the traffic separation scheme and the proposed regulatory framework for the proposed Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary is crucial. If there are no conflicting regulations, even if the scheme intersects with the sanctuary boundary, there shouldn't be any major issues. However, any potential concerns will be addressed through various mechanisms. Alongside our cooperation with the US Coast Guard as a cooperating agency, there are formal consultation requirements at both the draft and final stages. This is where the Coast Guard can voice their concerns and exercise their authority. Ultimately, the resolution will depend on the regulatory package outlined in the draft environmental impact statement. If there are issues like dumping or ballast discharge, they will be addressed accordingly.

Martin Scanlon: One aspect we haven't touched on yet is the safety at sea concerns related to speed restriction zones. When speed limits are imposed, especially in response to weather conditions, it can have significant implications for both the shipping and fishing industries. While I'm not sure about the extent of impact on shipping, I know that safety concerns are paramount for the fishing industry. How will these concerns be addressed moving forward?

Lisa Breslof: I'd like to clarify a historical point regarding your slide indicating the date of 2011. Prior to 2011, were there no fairway regulations in place? **Response:** New York Harbor has operated a vessel traffic system (VTS) since 1982, marking a significant shift from previous methods such as radio communication and binocular observation. Before the VTS integration, personnel stationed at a high office in Manhattan used binoculars to monitor incoming ships. It's worth noting that even with the VTS in place, the harbor doesn't experience overwhelming traffic; currently, there are about 15 arrivals per day. Comparatively, other ports handle much higher volumes.

Ray Fusco: To clarify and emphasize, while there has been maritime traffic to this port since 1873, the formal process of establishing prescribed Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) may have only been initiated in 2011. The Coast Guard, along with other federal agencies, undertakes a rigorous process to create these lanes, setbacks, and other regulations. Just as Stephen mentioned, they conducted a Port Access Route Study (PARS) to delineate traffic boundaries and identify additional measures needed in today's context. All of these are part of prescribed federal

processes led by the Coast Guard, involving collaboration with other agencies. This includes applying for TSS in specific areas based on the findings of studies like the PARS. The establishment of other TSS lanes may have occurred at various times in the past through similar processes.

Jim Kent: There has been extensive research conducted on threats to marine mammals, particularly whale strikes from ships. This issue not only relates to the spacing of vessels, as previously mentioned, but also to their speed. I'm curious if in the environmental impact statement, especially concerning the sanctuary designation, there is consideration given to measures such as ship speed regulations or other accommodations aimed at reducing the risk of ship strikes? **Response:** To address that, there's been a recent proposal by NOAA Fisheries regarding speed restrictions for vessels in areas where North Atlantic Right whales are present. This amendment suggests a reduction to 10 knots for vessels sized between 35 to 65 feet. However, this rule hasn't been finalized yet and is currently under review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Within the maritime industry, particularly among pilots responsible for guiding vessels into port, there are concerns about safety and operational challenges posed by such restrictions, especially when boarding large international vessels. It's important to note that international vessels entering US waters must have a pilot on board, according to law. This proposed regulation is primarily seasonal and coincides with whale migration seasons.

Matt Brookhart: I'd like to highlight that the Sanctuaries Act mandates us to approach designation documents with a focus on coordinated management. This entails analyzing not only measures taken by NOAA, our parent organization, but also those implemented by other agencies and existing management strategies in the ocean space. For instance, the speed restriction mentioned by Stephen falls under the jurisdiction of a sister line office within NOAA. This will be an integral part of our analysis as we develop the DEIS and draft management plan.

Proposed Sanctuary Management Plan Presentation

Noah Chesnin: This document represents the culmination of the hard work of everyone involved in the SAC, including subcommittees that have been diligently working since last year. The recommendations presented here are a consolidation of the proposals discussed during the February 15 SAC meeting. While we understand that there may not have been sufficient time for review, we're eager to discuss any changes that have been made based on feedback received during the meeting. We could have each subcommittee lead highlight a few key changes, or we could provide a version of the document that specifically highlights these changes via email for further review. It's essential to ensure that NOAA can incorporate these recommendations into the draft management plan efficiently. Thus, we're considering officially endorsing and

transmitting this document to NOAA, but we want to ensure that all SAC members feel comfortable with the content and timing. Your feedback on whether more time is needed for review would be greatly appreciated.

Questions and Comments from the SAC Members :

John Depersenaire: I'm curious about the timing of our initiatives, especially considering today's discussions on priorities and our future goals for the sanctuary. It appears that our next steps are contingent upon the completion of crucial documents like the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the terms of the designation. While I'm not advocating for a delay, would it be more practical to finalize these documents before proceeding with the draft management plan? **Response:** Currently, we're in the phase of developing the sanctuary proposal. As part of this process, we're actively working on the environmental impact statement and the proposal itself. When these documents are published, the draft management plan will be included alongside them. They'll all be released simultaneously.

Ray Fusco: I have two overarching comments regarding the document. Firstly, I appreciate the abundance of actions and calls to action from the different subcommittees, which I find powerful and engaging. However, I wonder if there's a section that outlines potential resources or guidelines for implementing these actions. For instance, in the education and outreach subcommittee, we discussed strategies for securing grants to support our programs. Secondly, I noticed some overlap in the document, which we attempted to address based on suggestions from NOAA and others. However, considering today's discussion, I believe there should be consistent coordination among the committees to ensure alignment in their work. I'm curious to see how the document will reflect this holistic approach. **Response:** It's definitely crucial to consider resource allocation beyond just funding. As we construct the action plans, I encourage the working groups to address the resource question comprehensively. This means not only identifying funding needs but also considering other resources necessary for plan execution. While the sanctuaries act requires us to prioritize funding scenarios, we should also recognize the importance of resource diversity. So, while we outline funding options for different scenarios, let's ensure that the action plans incorporate a purposeful resource acquisition strategy to achieve their objectives.

Ray Fusco: What I'm also suggesting is that resources like grants, volunteers, partnerships, and others would be pertinent to all subcommittees, not just education and outreach. Is there an overarching paragraph in the document that emphasizes the use and promotion of resources such as volunteer committees, partnership agreements, grant funding opportunities, and partnerships to support recreation, tourism, education, and outreach initiatives? **Response:** Yes, we will include introductory information in the draft management plans that identifies overall goals and objectives of the plan. The information you are speaking of is inherent in the introductory language of any of these management plans..

Sarah McLaughlin: NOAA Fisheries requests to spell out acronyms because, as I was reading, even within my own subgroup, I needed to look things up. Additionally, I noticed in the resource protection and conservation section, there's a question for NOAA to advise on wording. This seems significant, so I wanted to ask here. It's a word choice between sustainable and responsible. I wonder if that was a question for sanctuaries to answer. I'm not sure where this was raised. **Response:** To provide context, this is a question from the resource protection and conservation recommendations, strategy number two. The subcommittee proposed two words, "increase and encourage access and sustainable or responsible use of sanctuary resources." I believe the subcommittee's intent was for NOAA Sanctuaries to determine which word is appropriate.

Rick Weber: We reached a deadlock between "sustainable" and "responsible." From what I recall, we sought a word that provided protection without inadvertently endorsing a term that might be redefined elsewhere in government. Many of us were cautious about using a term that could be misinterpreted. This ties directly into my next point. Our subcommittee had productive discussions, even when we didn't see eye to eye, such as on the choice between "sustainable" and "responsible." Ultimately, we trust your team to make the best choice. The majority here seeks to protect a unique experience, not fix a problem. We want to safeguard something special. It's crucial that this sentiment is reflected in the terms of delegation and subsequent documentation. The private sector's shift in attitude over the past five years demonstrates a growing consensus on this issue. We're moving forward with trust and hope for the future. I urge the agency to capture this spirit in their writing. This isn't about us versus you; it's about preserving what's important and building from there. That's the essence of what we're striving for.

Greg DiDomenico: Why is this important? Again, what's the distinction between "responsible" and "sustainable" that we discussed last year? **Response:** From my organization's perspective, when we nominated Hudson Canyon as a proposed National Marine Sanctuary, we proposed that the existing fishery management authorities maintain their authority to regulate fisheries sustainably. This is a way to enshrine that in the recommendations for the management plan. The existing fishery management is sustainable, as it aligns with the objective under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA). Referencing the need for the fishery management councils (FMCs) to continue their job as they have been is crucial. Building intentional links provides a platform for the sanctuary to share success stories about fishery management structures and the journey of fish from sea to plate. By connecting with the term "sustainable," we can establish this bridge to MSA and the existing authorities, which we propose maintain authority to regulate fisheries.

Martin Scanlon: I want to emphasize that our rules and regulations far surpass Marine Stewardship Council certification. What I hope emerges from this is for the sanctuary to support

and promote our sustainable initiatives. It's not just about allowing us to fish; it's also about utilizing outreach and education to inform the American public about the sustainability efforts within our industries.

Carl LoBue: As someone who hasn't been involved in drafting a sanctuary plan before but has experience with conservation action plans, I find the resource protection and conservation section somewhat lacking in specific details. It seems to imply that the agency will be responsible for fleshing out those details. I'm curious about your comfort level with this approach and how the level of detail in this section compares to your starting point in other sanctuary plans you've worked on. **Response:** The management plan serves as a guiding document for implementing the non-regulatory aspects of the sanctuary. The management plan actions and strategies for newly designated sanctuaries tend to be higher level guidance instead of in the weeds like a management plan at a more mature sanctuary. The management is not meant to be an annual operating plan. We'll add more specificity to the document based on the recommendations from the Advisory Council as we develop the full management plan. It will follow a similar format to other management plans in the system.

Carl LoBue: It seems like there's some uncertainty around the specificity of the sanctuary management plan, particularly concerning its impact on highly migratory species. While the sanctuary plan may not significantly affect these species due to their wide-ranging nature, there's a need for clarity on its conservation purpose. This lack of specificity may hinder the group's ability to align on the plan's objectives. I'm curious to hear your perspective on whether this situation mirrors your experience with previous plans and if you're comfortable with it.

Response: It sounds like the draft management plan you're reviewing is at a similar level to previous plans you've worked on, such as the Stellwagen Bank management plan. While some may desire more specificity, the goal of a sanctuary management plan is strategic rather than prescriptive. It outlines priorities and strategies for the next five to ten years without specifying exact actions or partners. The action plan section will likely reflect this approach, with some areas having more detail. Overall, the plan aims to provide a strategic framework for guiding sanctuary activities rather than a detailed operational blueprint.

Ray Fusco: As a citizen at large, I've found the presentations incredibly insightful. While I've learned a lot, I'm particularly curious about the sanctuary designation area and its size. It struck me that while we've heard perspectives from fishing and commercial sectors, we haven't yet heard from the scientific community to understand the rationale behind the sanctuary's size and its implications for fisheries. I believe it's important to have a balanced discussion and hear from all sides. Personally, I'm eager to learn why the initial designation size was so large and whether we'll have the opportunity to explore this further before moving forward. If not, I'm open to engaging in online discussions to reconcile different perspectives within our small groups.

Response: When the Chairman and I proposed today's session on What's Happening in Hudson

Canyon, we aimed to ensure ample time for input from each SAC member and alternate across disciplines. However, given the complexity of the topic, it's clear we can't cover everything in one day. Our goal was to facilitate detailed presentations followed by thorough discussions. While we may not achieve this before the transmission deadline, our intent remains to provide each discipline with dedicated time, either in virtual meetings or as discussions progress in subsequent sessions.

Ron Rapp: What is the schedule for the designation to come out? And is there a time to have other stakeholders make similar presentations, or are we past that point now?

LeAnn Hogan: Currently, we're in the process of developing the sanctuary proposal, which includes the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), draft management plan, and proposed rule. Once this stage is completed, it's important to note that the proposal undergoes review by NOAA and the Department of Commerce, which takes time. Additionally, there's the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance process, where federal agencies review the documents to provide input. This adds further time to the timeline before the documents can be published. Right now, we're still in the phase of developing the sanctuary proposal. As for the timeline, there are numerous factors that can influence it, making it a complex issue to address.

Matt Brookhart: There's a lot happening right now in April 2024, especially with something coming up in November. Federal actions typically slow down around August as OMB anticipates potential changes in administration. Currently, the Biden administration is keen on seeing Hudson Canyon designated along with other sanctuaries, adding urgency to getting draft designation documents into the formal clearance process. \With the fiscal year 2024 election cycle in mind, time is of the essence. Our goal is to get these documents through Agency clearance and into OMB interagency review by August or September. We want to ensure the proposal reaches the public domain promptly to gather feedback. So while perfection may be elusive, the focus is on getting a draft out for public review.

Will Poston: Is the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries releasing a DEIS contingent on our approval of a draft management plan? **Response:** It's not conditional. But what we have done is asked for you, as the Advisory Council to provide us your input on the draft management plan.

Martin Scanlon: I believe it's crucial to hear from environmentalists and academics about their expectations and concerns regarding this proposal before rushing into any decisions. We must ensure that all voices are heard and that we address any questions or issues thoroughly. Rushing this process, especially in an election year, could lead to irreversible consequences. We need to take our time to get it right, considering the impact on businesses and people's lives. So, before moving forward with a draft, let's ensure it reflects the input of all stakeholders and meets the highest standards of accuracy and fairness.

Ron Rapp: I have two questions. Firstly, regarding the management plan, I understand that our role is to provide input rather than directly write the plan. I believe the input we've provided so far is substantial, and while there may be some minor adjustments, I wonder how much further the council needs to refine our inputs. Secondly, will the council have an opportunity to review a draft management plan before it's shared with other stakeholders? It's important for us to ensure that our input is accurately reflected, and if there are any questions or uncertainties as the management plan is being drafted, I hope we can address them collaboratively. **Response:** In terms of your description of the next steps, you're absolutely correct. The input provided by the subcommittees is integral to our development of the management plan. Our responsibility is to formulate the management plan based on the Advisory Council's recommendations. If there are any uncertainties or questions during the development process, we'll be sure to reach out to the subcommittees and the SAC for clarification.

Matt Brookhart: While the designation of Hudson Canyon is undoubtedly significant, it's important to recognize that it's just one of several designations within the sanctuary system currently underway. Each sanctuary holds its own historical context and policy considerations. This broader perspective informs the drafting process for all national marine sanctuaries, including those like Stellwagen and the Chumash designated nation in California. So, while we value the input specific to Hudson Canyon, we also consider the wider context when developing these draft documents.

V. Next Steps

1. Advisory Council: Take a thorough look at the recommendations for the draft sanctuary management plan document. Read it over carefully and jot down any initial thoughts or feedback.
2. As you read through the document, immediately flag any issues or concerns that arise. Designate someone to help nudge or remind team members to identify and address issues, ensuring that all concerns are captured in a timely manner.
3. With the issues identified, prepare to engage in a productive discussion aimed at resolving concerns and refining the document at the next SAC meeting.

VI. Public Comments

There were no members of the public that gave comments during the open public comment period of the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm ET