

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
December 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Date: December 4, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m. Meeting time

Location: College of Southern Maryland, LaPlata Campus, Building BI, Room 103-104

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Mark Losavio, Tane Casserley, Paul “Sammy” Orlando, Megan Ossmann, Shannon Ricles, David Dodsworth, Adam Wright, Dana Sanchez, and Jessie Frayser

SAC Members: Eileen Able, Dan Hamilton, Maggie Ostdahl, Jay Haigler, Bill Kilinski, Deanna Wheeler, Anne Vazhappilly (Youth Seat)

SAC Alternates: Sara Ramotnik, Lolita Kiorpes, Anne Stark, Erin Cooley (Youth Seat)

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Mario Harley (Piscataway Conoy Tribe), Elena Gilroy (Charles County), Sam Drury (Charles County), Sandi Olek (Maryland DNR), Susan Langley (MD Department of Planning), Ellen Hillborn (State of Virginia-Widewater State Park)

Guests: Joe and Shelly Perrie (Atlantic Kayak), Amy Green (University of Maryland), Zelda Proctor (Piscataway Conoy Tribe), Anjela Barnes (Piscataway Conoy Tribe), Dan Murphy (Presenter from Fish and Wildlife)

Media: Ellie and Henry Pratt

WELCOME:

Eileen welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

SAC BUSINESS

- Eileen asked for a motion to approve the October 2, 2023, meeting minutes. Dan Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes and Jay Haigler seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by the entire council. The minutes are available on the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac/involved/meetings.html>.
- Eileen introduced Jessie Frayser as the new Sanctuary Advisory Committee Coordinator. She then asked that introductions be made around the room. Attendees gave their name, profession, and role on the SAC if applicable.

- Eileen reminded members that the SAC application deadline is December 15th. She challenged that those reapplying would not just be a member but be a doer to connect community interests in Mallows Bay. The seats recently changed to support just this desire.
- Eileen shared a quote from the Chesapeake Gateway Training’s closing comments made by Chief Stephen Atkins of the Chickahominy Indian tribe. The quote called for a “Marshall Plan” for the Chesapeake Bay which led Eileen to ask, “What can you do to connect your work, your passion, and your energy to Mallows Bay?”
- Grant Opportunities - Megan McCabe (Ossmann)
 - Megan presented Grant Opportunities
 - Coastal Habitat Restoration
 - Maryland Chesapeake and Coastal Grants Gateway
 - Kids to Park Day
 - Ocean Odyssey Grants: Marine Debris
 - Megan shared initiatives to address volunteer involvement.
 - The Mallows Bay team will be creating a volunteer newsletter that will highlight opportunities and upcoming events the public could participate in.
 - A volunteer inquiry form has been created to collect contact information for people interested in volunteering.
 - The team is working to create more citizen science events to involve the public.
 - An example was given of how volunteers were connected to an initiative at Mallows Bay that allowed the community to put up bluebird boxes around the area.

SAC UPDATES

- Eileen introduced Dan Murphy who would be presenting on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife service as the Chief of the Division of Habitat Restoration and Conservation.
 - Eileen reminded the SAC that they cannot vote as a body to support or not support this cause but they may let their voice be heard as private citizens if so chosen.
- Dan Murphy indicated that he works in the Chesapeake field office for fish and wildlife services located in Annapolis, Maryland.
 - Dan explained that their office completes work all over the Chesapeake Bay, in and out of refuges. Currently a project is focused on landscape scale conservation, restoration, and planning.
 - To begin, Dan presented a timeline for a proposed land protection plan.
 - The timeline depicted a long-term partnership with Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance that began in 2010.

- A map depicted the Chesapeake-Delaware-Coastal Bays National Wildlife Refuges
 - Dan explained that the fish and wildlife service works with partners to protect this designated land.
- With the next slide, Dan explained that sprawled development and climate change was affecting several species.
 - Birds – specifically grassland birds
 - Insects
- Dan outlined the phases for land protection planning and what was expected.
 - He said that for Southern Maryland specifically, the focus would be on birds and other species native to the area.
 - The 2nd phase, a landscape conservation design, would be used as a geographic information tool.
 - The most important fish and wildlife hubs, including terrestrial, aquatic and migratory corridors, are to be identified.
 - The next map in the presentation showed how the Southern Maryland region satisfied the plans’ strategic growth priorities.
- Currently, a plan for targeted areas not already protected is awaiting approval by the Fish and Wildlife Services.
 - 170,000 acres and four refuge regions were identified as unprotected and are important for fish and wildlife habitat.
 - Mattawoman Creek was an example given because of the migratory fish that occupy the waters.
 - It is Dan’s opinion that the lands need to be protected so they are not covered in asphalt.
- In 2022, the first stakeholders meeting was held.
 - A frequently asked questions document will be emailed to the SAC members.
- Mario asked for the definition of a refuge as it pertains to this project.
 - Dan responded that it is space belonging to the government and the Fish and Wildlife Services, meaning funds can be used to manage things, such as development rights.
 - Anjela followed up by asking if this initiative had been presented to Charles County government?
 - Dan indicated it had not been directly presented but that there is a core team that includes the Southern Maryland Alliance of which the county is a part of, as well as the nature conservancy.
- Eileen informed the SAC members that they could request a copy of the presentation.
- Eileen called for SAC member updates and acknowledged Jay Haigler.
 - Jay indicated he was very excited to share this information because it involved Mallows in a big way.

- Jay said that we've discussed ways to bring attention and get people involved and this moves us towards that goal. New president and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Joel Johnson, has great plans for the sanctuaries and all they support.
- The Foundation and other partners are working together to create an inclusive blue workforce that supports climate resiliency. A letter of intent will be submitted at the end of February 2024.
- This initiative would provide a holistic workforce development and a social economic resiliency for ocean focused climate impacts. He said that they envision a National Marine Sanctuary Corps using a pilot program, which would include Mallows Bay and two other sanctuaries. After a projected 2-3 years, and based upon success rates, this program would be offered across sanctuaries. \$10,000,000 in funding is proposed in response to the Inflation Reduction Act.
 - Lolita asked what the workforce would entail?
 - Jay replied that some activities could include remote sensing, ROV piloting, and photogrammetry work. Industry partners would provide workforce training, then send participants into the field.
 - Also, partners associated with the project would be finalized by the February proposal
 - It was inquired who the targeted audience would be?
 - Jay said that Ocean Guardian high schools and other interested high schools along with colleges and universities, as well as mid-career adults looking to make a career change. A focus would also be indigenous communities that have been underrepresented. The project would allow them to be involved in whatever means they would like.
 - Amy Green suggested discussing the opportunity with pre-service teachers.
- Eileen said that there is a meeting on December 18th, at 1:00pm and that she would send a link to anyone who would like to be involved.
 - There are many places that are working on climate resilience programs particularly in Southern Maryland
 - A suggestion was made by Ellie Pratt indicating Saint Mary's College Marine Sciences program may be interested in this initiative
 - Anne Stark said that kids at schools that are not specifically career focused are often overlooked for programs such as this, and she advocated for them to be considered. She also suggested engaging elected officials so they would be aware of the future career opportunities
- Maggie Ostdahl shared that Patagonia Baltimore opened about a year ago and had invited local nonprofits to attend a trivia event that is focused around Patagonia's interest in marine protected areas. In the category of general public information, Maggie explained

they will be providing information about the National Marine Sanctuaries System and that the closest sanctuary to Baltimore is Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. Hopefully, this publicity will get more people interested in coming to visit Mallows Bay.

SANCTUARY UPDATES

- Eileen gave the floor to Sammy Orlando to begin sanctuary updates, and Sammy yielded the time to Tane Casserley.
- Tane began by saying he was very excited to share the progress of Terrain360 but would start by explaining things that came about because of it. The project began because of a desire to interpret the shipwrecks, but so much more has emerged.
 - Sketchfab pages have been created for photogrammetry models. Allyson Ropp, a Nancy Foster Scholar, and East Carolina University (ECU) PhD candidate, has created 16 photogrammetry models of what the ships would have looked like when they were afloat. She replicated these from old ship plans and other resources.
 - Another ECU graduate student, Ian Dunshee, helped to create photogrammetry models from the water up and reveals how these are islands of life. Tane modeled the 360 degree view made possible through drone work. These models make it possible to get a closer look without damaging the site. There are models for all emergent shipwrecks. These links can be used anywhere as a way to bring people to Southern Maryland
 - Our team worked with The Nationals Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Mario, and others, to create a Terrain360 YouTube page with ecological videos through a Piscataway lens. Each trail sign received its own page with videos and descriptions, so as to not lose any information
 - The hope is that resources would be created to help visitors navigate to these descriptions and videos.
 - Tane played a video of Mario explaining red cedar as an example from the website.
 - Tane displayed the draft of the Terrain360 experience. He walked the group through the different maps, including the ecology and hiking trails.
 - When on the home pages, Tane explained that we wanted everyone to have an enjoyable but safe experience by showing weather and water data at the bottom of the page.
 - Dan interjected saying the information was not updated.
 - Sammy said DNR must have pulled the buoy as they do each year in early November. He said there needed to be a note included to explain to people who may be looking for information in real-time.
 - Tane explained that the site did not just explain the shipwrecks, but it also includes the ospreys, pilings, Grady's Spit, and other such locations, as well as introductory videos to summarize each section.

- He indicated that there is an option to watch the videos again before entering the trail on the Terrain360 map tooltip before beginning the tour sections.
 - Example videos from Megan and Elena's introductions were played.
- o Eileen asked how people will be able to find the website when they are onsite at Mallows Bay? Tane indicated that was still up for discussion.
 - He continued to show the partners' page and the private businesses that participated in the project.
- o Tane informed the SAC that the Terrain360 site had been emailed to them, and he asked for their feedback using the feedback button located along the side of the website.
- o All feedback should be in by January 5th in hopes to make the best public product possible.
 - There was still a question on how to promote the website? Are there products we can create to help get the word out? How can we make connections to make history, culture and nature come alive because this is not just a NOAA product it is a Charles County and state of Maryland product as well?
 - Dan H. pointed out that the website is not to be shared with the public yet.
 - Jay asked when the website would be expected to go live? Tane said his hope is in the early spring, which makes promotion so important.
 - Discussion ensued, indicating that Southern Maryland Heritage Area could be a great place to advertise.
 - Anne Stark said that Southern MD paddlers groups often talk about other places they can meet, and she promotes the fact that there are other things to do at Mallows as well as kayaking. But they want to know other places to launch. She suggested reaching out to Dean Naujoks as their representative.
 - Amy Green remarked that this is such a valuable teaching tool. She suggested holding a webinar series on how teachers could use the resources on the site. A long-term question would be how to connect the school district to a formal curriculum using something like this.
 - Jay suggested a three-dimensional strategy, which included local, regional, and national levels. On the regional and national level, he suggested distribution networks that would attract people to Mallows Bay, and promoting the site and resources at colleges and other such places. There needs to be more focus on awareness for those that don't know about Mallows Bay and what it offers.
 - Tane explained that this is not on a government website, so it is able to be dispersed more widely. Many studies have been done on ecology so that the user is able to click on different species throughout the site. This could be the richest ecological content available of any sanctuary.
 - Eileen asked whether the goal of feedback is just to report problems or if it is for suggestions as well, such as specific ideas for advertising or content?

It was asked that suggestions be sent to Tane separately. The SAC was challenged that it is their obligation to provide feedback.

- Mark offered to help anyone who needed assistance with content, such as sketchfab, etc. and to please reach out to him if need be.
- Eileen reread the comment from Stephen Atkins to spur enthusiasm for all of the things the group has heard about today.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Eileen asked if there were any members of the public who would like to make a comment.
 - Ellen Hillborn introduced herself as a chief ranger from Widewater State Park and showed enthusiasm as a recent representative and partner with the SAC.

ADJOURN

As there was no other business, a motion was made by Jay Hailger and seconded by Dan Hamilton to adjourn the meeting. Stand by for more details on the SAC application process and future meeting dates.