

## Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Briefing: Actions Related to Commitments Shared at the first Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange (March 2024)

The first Cross-Pacific Indigenous Partnership Exchange was held in Neah Bay, Washington (September 2022) on the Makah Reservation. The Exchange brought together Indigenous partners who have existing or emergent relationships with places that are now also designated or nominated for national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments across the Pacific and are involved in managing these spaces. The Exchange facilitated discussions on topics of shared interest among Indigenous partners and hosted a cultural exchange to strengthen and sustain cross-Pacific Indigenous relationships. The Exchange further facilitated ongoing conversations on appropriate and meaningful mechanisms for NOAA's continued Indigenous engagement across the National Marine Sanctuary System.

The Exchange was hosted by the Makah Tribe, with representatives from the Quileute Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, the Native Hawaiian Community, the Aleut Community of Saint Paul Island Tribal Government, the Saint George Traditional Council, and staff and leadership from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) in attendance. Several additional Indigenous representatives were invited but were unable to attend.

In response to the impactful discussions and requests of the Indigenous Participants, ONMS leadership made eight commitments, referred to as the Neah Bay Commitments. The Neah Bay Commitments reflect ONMS' dedication to strengthening partnerships with Indigenous governments and communities.

Many of the commitments will be reflected through long-term and ongoing work and actions. This document provides a summary of actions occurring in association with each commitment, offering a snapshot of the work being done at this point and time.



The Makah Tribe hosted the first Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange in Neah Bay, Washington. Photo: Gonzolo Cid/NOAA

Table 1. Neah Bay Commitments: Progress Update provides a quick visual of the progress and timing for each commitment. Many commitments are embedded into ONMS approaches and will be reflected in standard actions indefinitely.

Commitment	Progress and Timing
1 - Convene another ONMS/Indigenous Partners Group in 2023, initially keeping a Pacific-wide focus (while considering the addition of other regions for future meetings).	Ongoing - completed within 2024.
2 - Establish internal ONMS principles and standard operating procedures for Tribal and Indigenous engagement with broad guidance and flexibility to adapt to various regions and situations.	Ongoing - Multiple internal actions.
3 - Continue to explore collaborative management as a continuum of approaches with flexibility and adaptation over space and time.	Ongoing - Long-term.
4 - Include references to our approach to collaborative management in sanctuary management plans to institutionalize these efforts.	Ongoing - Multiple actions are being taken and will apply to long-term efforts.
5 - Advocate internally for strengthening Tribal/Indigenous roles within our founding legislation, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and other possible legislation.	Ongoing - Long-term.
6 - Continue to increase capacity within ONMS for Tribal and Indigenous engagement, for example, by establishing additional ONMS cultural resources coordinator positions.	Ongoing - Multiple actions are being taken and will apply to long-term efforts.
7 - Strengthen internal NOAA coordination, especially with NOAA Fisheries, on Tribal and Indigenous relationships.	Ongoing - Multiple actions are being taken and will apply to long-term efforts.
8 - Continue to support and, where possible, expand cultural and language conservation and revitalization (e.g., use of Indigenous languages in outreach, place names, etc.).	Ongoing - Multiple actions are being taken and will apply to long-term efforts.



Attendees of the first Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange aboard the *Windsong*. Photo: Gonzalo Cid/NOAA

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Summary of ONMS' actions occurring in association with each commitment. The work focuses on institutionalizing approaches that work from a foundation of equitable partnerships across our collective efforts.

**Commitment 1:** Convene another ONMS/Indigenous Partners Group in 2023, initially keeping a Pacific-wide focus (while considering the addition of other regions for future meetings).

- ONMS staff convened an interim virtual meeting with attendees of the Neah Bay meeting to finalize the meeting summary report and to share information regarding the next Exchange.
- ONMS shared the Cross-Pacific Indigenous Partnership Exchange report from Neah Bay with all ONMS staff, NOAA's Tribal Team, and other agencies and entities. This allows others who were unable to join the foundational meeting to learn about the concerns and discussions, ONMS commitments, and avenues for improved coordination.
- In April 2024, ONMS is facilitating the 2nd Cross-Pacific Indigenous Exchange in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. We are grateful to the Esselen and Rumsen Homeland Peoples for welcoming us to Seaside and Monterey for the Exchange.
  - Invitations to the Exchange focused on bringing together Indigenous leaders with existing or emergent relationships with places designated or nominated for national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments across the Pacific. Representatives from Indigenous governments and organizations from Alaska, Washington, California, Hawai'i, American Samoa, the Marianas Trench, the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Nation have been invited to attend the Exchange.
  - In preparation for the Exchange, a small Indigenous Advisory Planning Group came together to aid in developing the agenda. All Indigenous Participants were invited to add to the draft agenda developed with the Indigenous Advisory Planning group.

**Commitment 2:** Establish internal ONMS principles and standard operating procedures for Tribal/Indigenous engagement with broad guidance with flexibility to adapt in a range of regions and situations.

- ONMS has developed the [\*Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes/Nations: A Field Guide\*](#) to advance staff understanding of our responsibilities and legal obligations during the consultation process. The field guide goes beyond best practices for consultation to emphasize the importance of building long-term relationships and ethical approaches.
- ONMS is developing updated guidance on conducting Section 106 consultations with Tribal Nations and Native Hawaiian Organizations under the National Historic Preservation Act.
- ONMS is developing internal engagement protocols to provide guidance to staff in working equitably with Indigenous Peoples. The guidance will build upon and reference protocols, rules, and guidances put forward by Indigenous Peoples.

- ONMS contributed to and aided in revising the [NOAA Procedures for Government-to-Government Consultation with Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments](#) (Handbook) (2023). The handbook is a tool to assist NOAA staff in conducting effective government-to-government consultations with federally recognized Tribal Nations.<sup>1</sup> It aims to provide consistency across NOAA in developing each office's Tribal consultation protocols. The handbook aligns with the [Uniformed Standards for Consultation](#), released by the White House in 2022.
- ONMS contributed to and aided in revising the [NOAA Guidance and Best Practices for Engaging and Incorporating \[including\] Indigenous Knowledge in Decision-Making](#) (NOAA IK guidance). The NOAA IK guidance highlights key points in working with Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge systems (2023).
- In 2024, ONMS will begin a review of its management plan review and condition report development processes to determine where we can increase equitable involvement of Indigenous Peoples and their approaches.

**Commitment 3:** Continue to explore collaborative management as a continuum of approaches with flexibility and adaptation over space and time.

- To aid in our learning, collaborations, coordination, and putting forward contributions, ONMS is actively involved in discussions with other agencies and exploring and learning from approaches that Indigenous Peoples are putting forward across the federal government, states, and other countries.
- Throughout the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designation process, ONMS has prioritized communications and engagement with Indigenous Peoples. To build a proposed collaborative management approach with direction and approaches put forward by Indigenous Peoples, ONMS has held approximately 40 in-person, virtual, and telephonic meetings with Chumash and Salinan Tribes and organizations. Additionally, government-to-government consultation is ongoing with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.
- ONMS has taken steps to enhance coordination and communications within the designation process for the proposed national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands. For example, to inform the development of the draft sanctuary designation documents (i.e., draft environmental impact statement, draft management plan, and proposed rule), the American Samoa government and NOAA co-hosted a workshop and public forum in Pago Pago, American Samoa in September 2023. ONMS ensured the participation of partners, other NOAA offices, and cooperating agencies to discuss the sanctuary proposal and review additional information about topics, such as commercial fishing, raised by the American Samoan government and local community members during scoping meetings. A summary report of the workshop can be accessed [here](#).
- ONMS is proposing to designate portions of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as a national marine sanctuary. ONMS is utilizing [Mai Ka Pō Mai](#), a native Hawaiian guidance document for managing the monument, to inform the proposed

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<sup>1</sup>The term Nation shows respect for Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and that Native Nations each have their own systems of governance. This document will use Tribe/Nation and Tribal Nation.

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management plan for the sanctuary through an Indigenous worldview. The Mai Ka Pō Mai brings forward Native Hawaiian values and principles for 20 directional strategies within five management areas that align with Native Hawaiian culture and values, as well as with federal and state agency mandates and missions.

- ONMS is co-leading a working group under the National Science and Technology Council’s Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge on co-production of knowledge and co-stewardship. The working group aids in communications across federal agencies.

**Commitment 4:** Include references to our approach to collaborative management in the sanctuary management plan to institutionalize these efforts.

- ONMS is updating the management plan for Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and is exploring collaborative management approaches that may be implemented with the Coastal Treaty Tribes and the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council. This work is being done through close communication and coordination with the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council and individual Tribal governments, as desired.
- To move forward in institutionalizing ONMS’ commitment to building relationships and collaborating equitably with Indigenous Partners, a few new management plans include potential ways that ONMS will work through reciprocity and enhanced outreach efforts. These efforts will aid in building relationships to support collaborative management further. Below are three examples.
  - ONMS published an updated Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary management plan in 2023. ONMS included a Cultural Heritage Action Plan that describes strategies and activities focused on enhancing partnerships with the Chumash community to support their deep connection to the sanctuary. Additionally, this action plan emphasizes the pursuit of greater understanding, respect, protection, and interpretation of the unique Chumash cultural resources and values connected to sanctuary waters.
  - ONMS published an updated management plan for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary in 2023. ONMS included a strategy in the Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination Action Plan that calls for collaboration with Tribal Nations with cultural ties to the sanctuary through the following actions: identify and initiate engagement with appropriate Tribal Nations, develop pathways of communication, and pursue opportunities for internships and youth programs.
  - ONMS is proposing to designate a new national marine sanctuary in Lake Ontario and has included several strategies for engagement with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples in the proposed sanctuary’s management plan. These strategies include proposing to collaborate to identify research priorities and conduct collaborative research, identify historic properties and cultural landscapes, and establish student research opportunities.

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**Commitment 5:** Advocate internally for strengthening tribal/Indigenous roles within our founding legislation, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA), and other possible legislation.

- ONMS continues to review our legal authorities for ways to enhance collaborative management with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples. For example, ONMS supports amending the NMSA to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' and Tribal Nations' roles in the co-management of sanctuaries and to create new mechanisms to fund Indigenous-led conservation efforts. To date, Congress has not reauthorized or amended the NMSA, and there is currently no effort underway to do so.
- ONMS has been working with the NOAA Tribal team to advance work on co-stewardship under the Joint Secretarial Order 3403. Through these efforts, work has been focused on hosting listening sessions and consultations with Indigenous Peoples. ONMS will continue to work closely with the NOAA Tribal Team to develop the first annual report in response to the Department of Commerce signing the JSO 3403, and to explore opportunities to apply co-stewardship based on NOAA's authorities, including the NMSA.

**Commitment 6:** Continue to increase capacity within ONMS for Tribal and Indigenous engagement, for example, by establishing additional ONMS cultural resources coordinator positions.

- ONMS plans to hire personnel and/or contractors for the ONMS Eastern and West Coast regions to support engagement with Indigenous partners for new sanctuary designations.
- ONMS Pacific Islands region has contracted two community liaisons in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (CNMI) to advise and aid with on-the-ground coordination, communication, and collaboration throughout the Pacific Remote Islands designation process.
- ONMS has also focused on building internal capacity for engaging and working with Tribal Nations and Indigenous governments and communities through training, guidance documents, and opportunities to hear from Indigenous speakers. For example:
  - ONMS, in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, worked with Haskell Indian Nations University to host a training on Indigenous engagement and relationship building in 2023.
  - ONMS developed an Indigenous Speaker Series. ONMS facilitates the series in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and is a platform for centering Indigenous Peoples' voices, knowledge, approaches, and solutions through training and discussions.
  - ONMS co-developed and facilitated workforce training on government-to-government consultation, engagement, and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge based on the NOAA guidance and federal government directives released in 2022 and 2023.

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**Commitment 7:** Strengthen internal NOAA coordination, especially with NOAA Fisheries, on Tribal and Indigenous relationships.

- Collaborating with colleagues within the National Ocean Service, ONMS has taken the lead within NOAA to co-develop a Community of Practice (CoP) focused on Indigenous Engagement, Partnerships, and Indigenous Knowledge. The CoP welcomes staff and leadership from across NOAA to aid in collaboration and coordination, share concerns and solutions, and enhance awareness.
- ONMS is leading a team of NOAA office representatives in developing guidance on engagement with the Native Hawaiian Community. The guidance will include standard engagement protocols for ethically working with the Native Hawaiian Community.
- ONMS is leading the designation process for a proposed national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands in close coordination with NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, co-managers of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. NOAA co-hosted a workshop with the American Samoa government in September 2023 to discuss the sanctuary proposal and review additional information about topics, such as commercial fishing, raised by the American Samoa government and local community members during scoping meetings.
- ONMS works with each Coastal Treaty Tribe and the Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council Science Panel to coordinate across NOAA on research projects and other activities occurring within the region. For example, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and ONMS have partnered on subtidal kelp surveys within the sanctuary and coordinated with the Coastal Treaty Tribes on this research program, including having Tribal staff on the research vessel during surveys, to engaging with high school and college-aged interns at Makah Fisheries Management to share this research occurring within their usual and accustomed fishing areas.

**Commitment 8:** Continue to support and, where possible, expand cultural and language conservation and revitalization (e.g., use of Indigenous languages in outreach, place names).

- ONMS is partnering with different Indigenous governments, groups, and communities to include Indigenous languages in public-facing communications, such as in signs at national marine sanctuaries and visitor centers and on webpages. Indigenous languages are included through direct guidance and leadership from Indigenous Peoples. ONMS will continue to work with our Indigenous partners to explore more ways to use Indigenous languages and to support language revitalization across the National Marine Sanctuary System. Below are examples of the work in the last 24 months.
  - ONMS works routinely to publish outreach materials in the Gagana Sāmoa languages. This work has included 16 bilingual exhibits (in Gagana Sāmoa and English).
  - ONMS updated five interpretive signs in coordination with Channel Islands National Park. The signs include dialects of the Chumash language to share the Chumash names of the five Islands. The signs were installed on the Santa Barbara, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa islands.

- ONMS worked closely with the Piscataway Conoy Tribe to develop nine trail signs to include the Piscataway dialect of the Algonquin language for Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary in Maryland.
- ONMS installed 21 exhibits that prioritized the inclusion of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language) display titles within the Kīhei visitor center of Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.
- ONMS installed eight bilingual exhibits (in Hawaiian language and English) at the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument at the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center.
- Through the Ocean Guardian School program, ONMS collaborated with Indigenous language speakers to develop three signs in the Native Hawaiian language. The signs are digitally accessible and can be printed by any school.
- Facilitated through the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a co-trustee of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, the Papahānaumokuākea Cultural Working Group created a Native Hawaiian Nomenclature to provide Hawaiian names for places and new species without known Hawaiian names. These names demonstrate characteristics and behaviors through a collective Native Hawaiian process to build, strengthen, and continue present-day relationships with elements/species in Hawaiian ecosystems as a placeholder for future generations. Developing new Hawaiian names for recently discovered biological species in Papahānaumokuākea is an important step towards honoring Hawaiian traditions and maintaining a living culture and language on the islands. They are shared within scientific publications as common names and sometimes in scientific names. The Nomenclature Subcommittee has created 67 names ranging from corals, plants, algae, birds, boats, and fishes, including place names and research expeditions. These new names help to connect these new life forms to mo‘okū‘auhau (the genealogy) of the Hawaiian Universe—the traditional understanding that people, place, and creatures are of a single genealogical thread that connects and binds all things.



ONMS worked closely with the Piscataway People to develop trail signs in Mallows Bay State Park in Maryland. Photo: Matt McIntosh/NOAA



- ONMS is working with Indigenous Partners and their communities to center Indigenous cultures within sanctuaries and monuments. Below are three examples.
  - Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument became part of the World Heritage site online exhibit on Google Arts & Culture in 2023. The virtual site tour features the monument’s treasures, stories, and cultural knowledge. Papahānaumokuākea staff worked with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to bring the monument’s cultural and natural treasures directly into everyone’s home, increasing awareness about the need for the monument’s safeguarding and conservation. The site can be accessed [here](#).
  - Members of the Papahānaumokuākea Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group and the Ocean Exploration Trust team have been growing an equitable and inclusive partnership honoring Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) knowledge systems and providing opportunities for ‘Ōiwi to participate on expeditions. During the last two E/V *Nautilus* expeditions into Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in April and August 2022, Kānaka ‘Ōiwi were represented as science and engineering interns, mapping interns, science communication fellows, and cultural liaisons. This partnership has led to the creation of Hawaiian names for each expedition through the Cultural Working Group Nomenclature subcommittee, promotional videos in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language) for live ship-to-shore interactions with kula kaiapuni (Hawaiian immersion schools), and the development of a Hawaiian language terminology list for technical terms used during the expeditions.
  - ONMS deepened collaborations with Hoh Tribal members and staff, several of whom joined the ONMS team on the R/V *Storm Petrel* to observe kelp forest surveys at Destruction Island, an important cultural site, in late July 2023. Many Hoh Tribal members have not had an opportunity to access Destruction Island for decades, and being in the presence of this culturally significant place was a powerful experience. The Hoh Tribe has requested opportunities for ONMS to support future trips to Destruction Island for Tribal members and Elders.



Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument became part of the World Heritage site online exhibit on Google Arts & Culture in 2023. Photo: Ruben Carrillo