

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Draft Management Plan**

- March 18, 2009 Public Meeting Minutes-

Date: March 18, 2009

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Presque Isle District Library, Rogers City, MI

MEETING ATTENDEES

NOAA: Jeff Gray, Tera Panknin, and Reed Bohne

SAC Members: Chuck Wiesen, Carol Shafto, and Steve Kroll

Public: Beach Hall, Harold Chase, Mark Slown, Karmen Slown, Dave Snow, Jane Kroll, Barb Stone, Tom Stone, Del Conley, and Brian Wagner

INTRODUCTION

Jeff presented on the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and management plan review (MPR). In terms of MPR, Jeff mentioned scoping, working groups, resolutions, and bills.

Beach Hall asked if they expected the bill to pass or if it was just timing. Harold Chase replied that they didn't expect it to, it was timing, and it was introduced late. Carol and Steve testified at hearings related to boundary expansion and reauthorization of the national marine sanctuaries act. Reed expressed appreciation for their testimonies. Congressional action would result in boundary expansion. The sanctuary could also expand administratively. Resource protection is the overall goal of the sanctuary and all the programs work together toward that goal. Next steps for MPR include revisions to the Draft Management Plan based on comments and responses to comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Beach Hall, Rogers City Mayor:

On Page 9 of the Draft Management Plan, include that the local communities that would be affected by the expansion approve of expansion. A number of resolutions have been passed already. Presque Isle County is supportive. Where you mention that the sanctuary is located on Northwest Lake Huron, maybe instead write that it is off the shores of northeast lower Michigan. I fully support the plan and spent a great deal of time today reading it. It is a job very well done and well pictured.

Karmen Slown:

She's seen the marine sanctuary. I like . .

Mark Slown, Rogers City Manager:

I'm thrilled by the sanctuary currently in existence and the management plan represents preservation, which is highly valued in this community. We believe in economic development through preservation. This is respected and reflected in the document. The history and the heritage we treasure are important to this community and the management plan is crucial and should go forward. The community of Rogers City is strongly supportive of the sanctuary and its efforts. Karmen has been to see the exhibit, the Western Hope. I learned that underneath the water there's . . .

Barb Stone:

What's been done here in Lake Huron and the protection it has provided is invaluable. I would like to see expansion move up. I'm looking forward to that. People who come out to the Fay have respect for what's there.

Dave Snow, Director of Rogers City Chamber of Commerce:

I haven't had a chance to thoroughly examine the document, but I'm exciting about the proposed expansion and what that could do to this area. We see filtering of consumers from Alpena to the lighthouses and state parks. Expansion of the sanctuary will complement tourism and attracting visitors and guests to our area. Being a sanctuary is a powerful attraction. I'm excited about the prospect of expansion. I'm thrilled and awestruck. Becoming a sanctuary would mean more visitors and would put a spotlight on northeast Michigan, not to mention help local business. It's a marvelous idea and I'm 100% behind it. You will receive a letter of support from the Rogers City Chamber of Commerce.

Tom Stone (40 mile point):

More people are visiting the Fay. People sometime spend a day there. You can wade out.

Jeff's response: The Fay is a great example of a wreck families can visit. You don't need to be a diver.

Beach Hall:

This spring bike trail will be expanded from Hoeft State Park to the 40 Mile Point Lighthouse. This will be an additional draw to the Fay.

Jane Kroll:

The sanctuary has provided educational opportunities and has exposed kids to things they wouldn't otherwise have been able to experience. This is critical. I hope that stays a focus of the sanctuary. Educational pieces have to stay strong.

Beach Hall:

As far as the Rogers City school system, classes have been there more than once. Some went sailing. The sanctuary is a benefit to the schools up here.

Carol Shafto:

I'm excited about the plan and expansion. The sanctuary is important for destination tourism and regional cooperation. When Rogers City prospers, Alpena prospers, and vice versa. The sanctuary has strengthened intergovernmental relations. We work cooperatively. Neighbors for one cause, then neighbors for all. People come and say, "What else you got?" The sanctuary builds the region, cooperation, and the economy. Long term, it will help create destination tourism.

Brian Wagner (DNR):

We're looking for opportunities to partner with the growing sanctuary, especially for the US 23 heritage route. Everything you're saying fits in with what we're doing.

Steve Kroll:

What is neat about the management plan is that everything is intertwined. Education is important, not just for maritime heritage. If they appreciate shipwrecks, they help protect them. We condensed it into four areas. Resource protection is the key to the whole program. The management plan does that.

Del Conley, Rogers City Planning Commission:

The key factor is the rich maritime heritage we have. It can be the foundation for all the things you're trying to develop - economically and historically. This is a tremendous opportunity. The picture alone is fantastic. It can be expanded into so much more.

Jane Kroll:

The sanctuary has been a catalyst for the northeast region. You never hear anything negative. As far as economic development, everyone has a mission and the sanctuary has been a focal point and helped many people with their interests.

Beach Hall:

The sanctuary has made Alpena a nicer place to visit, quite frankly.

Carol Shafto:

Rogers City and Alpena have an intergovernmental agreement on weather. If there's good weather, it's Alpena. If it's raining, Rogers City is in charge of the weather. We have a friendly rivalry. The area where the heritage center is located would not be redeveloped if the sanctuary offices were not there. The sanctuary is the "anchorstore" of Alpena's waterfront redevelopment. Without the sanctuary, we wouldn't have had the funding to redevelop the waterfront. As years go by and we see those dreams coming to fruition, we will think had we not had that anchorstore, these things wouldn't have happened. It benefits the Jesse Besser Museum. There's reciprocity.

Jeff thanked everyone for coming. Thanks to the SAC who pushed to make the management plan digestible. This is a different type of document for our program. It helps people understand what we're doing. The rest of the program responded well to this format. Carol, Steve, and Chuck were most heavily involved in the plan development.

Steve Kroll:

The advisory council is a creative group of people and I encourage the group to come to meetings and apply for open seats on the council. The Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is an example of people dreaming.

Carol Shafto:

A lot of people don't realize the credibility the sanctuary has in the sanctuary system. A lot of the innovative things we're doing have gained national attention. Thunder Bay has great credibility. It's a reassuring thing for us to know that we're respected around the nation. It's a great thing. A lot of things piloted here are being used now. Another thing we have is a champion – Senator Carl Levin. We have his sponsorship and commitment.

Jeff presented the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Trail.

Mark Slone:

Rogers City is strongly supportive of the project.

Adjourned: 7:45 p.m.