

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council**

- August 19, 2008 Meeting Minutes-

Date: August 19, 2008

Time: 6:30pm – 9:00pm

Location: Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, 500 W. Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI

MEETING ATTENDEES

NOAA: Jeff Gray, Chuck Bennett, Russ Green, Pat Labadie, Tera Panknin, Jean Prevo, Mary Beth Stutzman, Karen Brubeck (National SAC Coordinator)

State of Michigan: None

SAC Members: Steve Kroll, Vera Kavanaugh, Karen Tetzlaff, Lynda VanDusen, Carol Shafto, Carl Bourdelais, Bill Estlack, Ed Retherford, Jerry Meek

SAC Alternates: Mark Upham, John McVeety, Don Newport, Chuck LeFebvre, Shari Davis, Chuck Wiesen, Jim Dessenberg, Dennis Bodem, Eric Cline, John McConnell

Ex-officio Member: None

Public: Sheila Phillips

Media: Patty Ramus, *The Alpena News*

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Steve Kroll welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Steve introduced Karen Brubeck the National SAC Coordinator.

Steve announced the council seats and alternates that were recently selected:

Education – Higher Education

Olin Joynton

Alternate – Chuck Wiesen

Recreation

Don Beem

Alternate – Mark Upham

Citizen-at-Large

Vera Kavanuagh

Alternate – Jim Dessenberg

Business/Economic Development

Alternate - Don Newport

Fishing

Edward Retherford

Alternate - Chuck LeFebvre

Approve May & June SAC Meeting Minutes. Lynda VanDusen motioned to approve the May 6, 2008 meeting minutes. Vera Kavanaugh seconded the motion, and the minutes were passed.

John McConnell motioned to approve the June 17, 2008 meeting minutes. Lynda VanDusen seconded the motion, and the minutes were passed.

2008 SAC CHAIRS/COORDINATORS MEETING - Steve Kroll

The 2008 SAC Chairs/Coordinators Annual Meeting was held at the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, May 12-15, in Newport News, VA. Steve showed pictures from the tour of the Mariners Museum and the field trips to Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown.

Steve talked about National Marine Sanctuary Director Dan Basta's opening remarks where he announced that the marine sanctuaries will be elevated from a "program" to an "office" and stressed the importance of this change. Dan spoke about advisory councils and how they are a very important part of what sanctuaries are and how we do things. The public process can sometimes be messy and time consuming, and that we might think we are not getting anything done, but it's part of our process. Dan also said that national marine sanctuary program is about effecting 303 million people, not just the people living within the sanctuaries.

Reauthorization - Marine Sanctuaries Act - Carol Shafto and Steve Kroll were both called to Washington, DC to testify on behalf of the reauthorization of the Marine Sanctuaries Act. It was mentioned at the annual meeting that if a council member wants to show their support of the act, you need to do it as an individual citizen, not as a member of the advisory council. Please contact Steve or Carol if you want to hear more about their testimonies.

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation - Lori Arguelles gave a presentation at the annual meeting. She stated that 96% of money goes toward programs, 2% on accessing more funding, and 2% to managing the foundation.

National Council of Chairs - The topic of having a national council of chairs was brought up by another chair during the chairs' only session with Dan Basta. The idea was that it would be a committee on a national level that would represent the councils of each site. The idea behind it is to try to create a group that represents the councils that would be at a higher level, which would make it possible for this group to be on par with other larger organizations and have representation at the same level. Steve Kroll asked everyone to think about whether we would want to support that idea, and be a part of some type of higher group. The suggestion during the annual meeting was that the person representing the site could either be the chair or just someone selected from the council. This topic will be discussed again at the chairs meeting in May 2009. Steve asked everyone to please share their thoughts with him and we can discuss it at the next meeting, and/or form a subcommittee to put together a recommendation on our council's views on this issue.

Karen Brubeck stated the idea of a national council of chairs is just in the discussion phase, so it is possible it may not even move forward. The goals would have to be pretty broad based because of the 14 sanctuaries with 14 different purposes.

Chuck Wiesen asked if there is another agency that has an effective group similar to this. National SAC Coordinator Karen Brubeck said that the National Parks Service has a national advisory board. Chuck asked if each park had a chair that met? Karen said no, the national parks don't each have an individual council like the sanctuary program does.

Carol Shafto mentioned that this was a topic at most of the national council meetings she attended when she was our chair. This council could be made up of a representative of each of the councils or the other concept of having "interests" represented instead of the sanctuaries. There are pros and cons for each concept. Carol would want Thunder Bay NMS at the table if this does happen, however it happens, and would push to have someone from our area on board.

2009 SAC Chairs/Coordinator Meeting - Dan Basta has decided that the 2009 annual meeting will be hosted here at Thunder Bay NMS. The meeting is scheduled for the week of May 4th. Karen is here meeting with staff to start putting together the agenda and work on logistics. We are looking for field trip ideas (please let Jean or Steve know if you have any suggestions). The SAC will be invited to a reception being held on the evening of Tuesday, May 5, 2009.

MPR AND BOUNDARY EXPANSION UPDATE

A draft management plan review timeline was presented by Jeff Gray:

September 5, 2008 - Begin headquarter clearance of the Draft Management Plan

September 2008 - State of Michigan review of the Draft Management Plan

October 2008 - Revise Draft Management Plan based on the comments from headquarters and the State of Michigan; Complete layout

December 2008 - Draft Management Plan printed

January 2009 - Release the Draft Management Plan and begin public review/comment period

January 2009 - Present the Draft Management Plan to the SAC

January 2009 - Draft Management Plan public meetings

March 2009 - End Draft Management Plan public review/comment period and begin preparing final Management Plan

Boundary Expansion & Sanctuary Reauthorization - Jeff stated that the full management plan review must be done before the boundary expansion is final.

The boundary expansion of Thunder Bay NMS would be the three counties (Presque Isle, Alpena, Alcona) and extend out to the international boundary. A question was asked about the tribal fishing nets and it was stated that the current regulation would be the same. Thunder Bay NMS does not regulate fishing.

Sanctuary reauthorization is moving quickly. Carol Shafto and Steve Kroll both testified on behalf of reauthorization, their testimonies are attached. If the reauthorization does not get passed during this administration, the process will start over in January 2009.

Carol and Steve both talked briefly about their experiences in Washington, DC. They both said it was an honor to be chosen to testify on behalf of Alpena, Rogers City, and the sanctuary program.

SANCTUARY UPDATE

Enforcement Update - Jeff said that he has invited Alpena's U.S. Coast Guard Chief Rich Houchin to attend our meetings as a non-voting member. The sanctuary increased law enforcement patrols this year and was given some money by the State to help cover costs for the U.S. Coast Guard. Examples of this years' efforts are:

- U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary flights
- DNR patrols and marina patrols
- Coordinated patrols with the DNR and U.S. Coast Guard to spread the vessels out and not double up in the same area.

This is the first time we have had such extensive patrols in the sanctuary.

What is the sanctuary enforcing? The funding received was put toward the effort of looking for looting or violations of sanctuary regulations. The DNR can only enforce State regulations, so it is important to have the U.S. Coast Guard involved, since they can enforce federal regulations. It was asked if we have ever had a case? Jeff said there has not been a case since he has been here. In the past, and in other areas, most cases are reported by other divers and through word of mouth. It is good to have a presence on the water to spread the word about sanctuary regulations and our mission.

These law enforcement partnerships provide support, as well as the additional safety benefits of having extra patrols on the water. Jeff mentioned that the sanctuary would like to continue to increase the amount of patrols and that they are also trying to get some of the same officers in the sanctuary as much as possible to develop good relationships with the divers.

Jeff said that the sanctuary plans to continue interagency cooperation with city, county, and state police to become more efficient and he would like to have a formal agreement with these agencies in place.

Other ideas that have been suggested are holding an enforcement workshop, and also educating the people at the marinas, boaters, and other divers to know what to look for and who to report suspicious behavior to, and to make sure we are doing it in a cautious way. Currently, the law enforcement agencies have taken an interpretive approach when boarding the vessel, they hand out sanctuary information. Jeff said this is a good way of improving the visitors to Thunder Bay's overall experience on the water while enforcing the regulations and looking for looters.

2008 Thunder Bay Maritime Festival - The 2008 festival was the biggest so far, with around 15,000 people in attendance and over \$10,000 raised in sponsorships and in-kind donations. Jeff said that we received good comments from people that visited the exhibits and that the large crowds didn't seem bothersome to the visitors. Jeff says he would like to see the Maritime Festival continue to expand and grow. He would also like to see the sanctuary marketing regionally, not just Maritime Festival, but all of the wonderful things Alpena has to offer on July 4th.

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center Exhibits - The exhibits have been open for four months and during this time we have had approximately 30,000-35,000 visitors (including the 15,000 during maritime fest). The staff has received great responses from visitors, as well as many positive critiques from other professionals. Jeff said that the sanctuary is focusing on the visitor's experience and have hired three Visitor Experience Specialists (VES) to work in the GLMHC. The VES's are Ron Chatfield, Karen Cirulis, and David Usher. We also continue to have volunteer support on the weekends, during tours, groups and special events. The sanctuary has also hired a Visitor Experience Coordinator, Sarah Waters, who will start after Labor Day.

Jeff talked about the next steps for the exhibits. The exhibits were only 90% complete when we opened in June. We are using the visitors to understand and learn how people use the exhibits so we can adapt and complete phase 1.

As phase 1 is completed, we will begin phase 2, which includes bringing back "*Science on a Sphere*" and incorporating it into a NOAA science hall type area. The idea for the NOAA science hall is to bring the world to Northeast Michigan and Northeast Michigan to the world, using telepresence and programs on the sphere.

The staff are also assessing the boat building program and looking at giving a dedicated space to them.

Jeff said that we continue to build off of what we have here, physically with exhibits, but also with programming beyond the regular experience.

Marketing & Promotion - Sanctuary staff have been receiving a lot of questions about kayaking and snorkeling from visitors. Staff have started working on a brochure and are hoping to get it printed within the next few weeks. Also, NEMCOG just received a grant from Lt. Governor Cherry for a kayaking trail in Northeast Michigan.

Jeff said that we realize that marketing and promotion is very important and has been working on a marketing plan. The sanctuary is partnering with the City of Alpena and the Convention and Visitors Bureau to become part of Travel Michigan's *Pure Michigan* campaign.

Jeff also mentioned that we are still working on getting directional signs up around Alpena.

RESEARCH UPDATE

The sanctuary received a NOAA Ocean Exploration grant. This grant is being used to look for shipwrecks using side scan sonar. The researchers and sanctuary staff covered 75 square miles last week. Dr. Rod Mather from the University of Rhode Island is heading up this project.

Technical Diving Projects - The sanctuary needs to work on the deeper wreck sites and develop a way to make moorings happen in deep water, because these deeper sites are just as popular to divers as the shallower wrecks.

One of these technical sites is the *Kyle Spangler* which was originally discovered by diver Stan Stock. Sanctuary staff are working with him to document the wreck. Once the wreck is documented the coordinates will be released to the public. This project will take place the first two weeks of September.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Mary Beth asked the council, "How much money do you think has been raised in the exhibit donation box from June 15th to Monday, August 18?" The answer was \$5,941. We are going to work with the VES's to have a more standard way of getting the visitors to put donations in the box. Dennis Bodem suggested it might be a good idea to have a sign posted stating how much it costs for each person to visit, still stating that it is free. We have thought about that and are working on signs stating the importance of donations.

Mary Beth passed around some of the comments we received in the visitor sign in book. The sanctuary has received good comments from all over the United States, as well as other countries. We currently have a volunteer entering the comments into the computer for later use.

From the comments we have learned that many people are coming here specifically for the exhibit.

We welcome your ideas to help spread our mission, and we continue to look at all of our funding options and partnerships.

PRESENTATION

Ryan Eustice - University of Michigan Perceptual Robotics Lab, Dept. of Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering, Dept. of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
Ryan Eustice gave a presentation on AUV's which are autonomous underwater vehicles. He is currently testing an AUV in the sanctuary and has plans to test another here next summer.

Public Comment. None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Action Items:

Sanctuary staff will draft and mail meeting minutes to council members.