

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- August 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: August 2, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Andrew Augustyn, John Bright, Stephanie Gandulla, Randy Gilmer, Jeff Gray, Russ Green, Joe Hoyt, Joey Jackson, Daniel Moffat, Caleb O'Brien, Jean Prevo, Maddie Roth, Cassandra Sadler, Kimberly Schultz, Sarah Waters

State of Michigan: n/a

NEMI/GLSI: n/a

SAC Members: Jim Dessenberg, Nancy Kinney, Steve Kroll, Don MacMaster, Don Newport, Ann-Marie Ruder, Carol Shafto, Chuck Wiesen

SAC Alternates: Mike Beaulac, Don Gilmet, Bob Krafft, Pat Labadie, R.C. Laugal, Tim Lee, Merl Melton

Non-voting Members: Al Moe

United States Coast Guard: n/a

Media: n/a

Public: Patricia Janes, Calvin Mires, Eric Peace

WELCOME AND ACTION ITEMS:

Steve Kroll called the meeting to order. The council reviewed and approved the minutes from the May 12, 2022 council meeting.

Jeff Gray introduced new staff members Daniel Moffat - Great Lakes Stewardship Coordinator and Education Specialist, Cassandra Sadler - Resource Protection Specialist and Kimberly Schultz – Community Liaison and Grants Specialist.

Jeff also introduced Dr. Calvin Mires who was at Thunder Bay in 2005 as a Ciler Fellow. He is here participating in the eDNA project.

The recruitment period for the following seats is complete and applications are being reviewed:

Citizen-at-Large
Education (higher education)
Fishing (recreational, charter, and/or commercial)
Maritime Industry/Business
Tourism/Recreation

We are hoping to have the selections made and members in place for the next meeting.

There will be a memorial service for Captain Spencer Cootware on Sunday, August 21 at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center. We will send out more details. There will also be a memorial fund set up with the Friends of TBNMS for student programs at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center and onboard the *Lady Michigan*.

EASTERN REGION & OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES UPDATE -

Russ Green, Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS Superintendent

Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS was designated in August 2021 and it encompasses four large communities. The sanctuary is a way to tie these communities together. It is a shipwreck sanctuary, similar to Thunder Bay, but they don't allow anchoring on sites that have mooring buoys. The shipwrecks span from the 1830s to 1930s. They are currently working on a facilities study. There are 12 working groups with 25 different people to get input on the public vision document.

Working with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey to map the Wisconsin sanctuary this summer. The data from this survey is great for shipwreck mapping and also biology/habitat maps.

Invited teachers on board during a research project to give them an immersive experience. John Bright participated in mapping the deep-water wreck sites. During the project they captured video to use for promotional items later.

Wisconsin is in the process of establishing an advisory council. Applications are due on October 1. Jean Prevo will be working as the SAC Coordinator for Wisconsin. More information can be found [HERE](#).

Joe Hoyt, Maritime Heritage Program National Coordinator – The Maritime Heritage Program is working on increasing monitoring assessments at the sites across the sanctuary program. Creating 3d models to track impacts that affect the sites over time. The technology that they are using allows them to capture several hundred images in about a 20-minute dive.

Lake Ontario is moving along, the proposed rule has cleared NOAA and has gone into OMB for clearance. Hoping to get it out for public comment in the fall. Thunder Bay SAC will discuss drafting a letter of support when the public comment period opens.

Mooring Buoys – Mooring Buoys are one of the most important things the Thunder Bay NMS does to protect our resources. Previously the depth of all of the wreck sites that had buoys was 120 feet or less, but this year the sanctuary was able to install mooring buoys on the deep-water wrecks.

Mooring buoys are great tourism tools to give folks access to the sites, it's safer and also helps protect the wreck by preventing anchor damage.

Deep-water wrecks were harder to get buoys on, but are the most susceptible to anchor damage. It took 15 years to get these sites approved. The original permits were denied because the shipping industry thought it could create a navigation hazard. Sanctuary staff continued working with the U.S. Coast Guard and Lake Carriers Association and were able to show that divers had placed unpermitted buoys out there already which created a greater safety risk (no lights, not documented on the charts, etc.) The permits were granted for these sites in 2022.

Last year the crew used ROVs to document the 12 deep-water sites to have a good understanding of where to install the mooring. These deep-water sites are in 130 to 330 feet of water. The sanctuary received some funding this year to purchase the buoys and the supplies for the mooring systems. With the assistance of the U.S. Coast Guard and their vessel the 12 buoys were deployed this summer.

This project could not have been done without the U.S. Coast Guard and the Lake Carriers Association. Lafarge was also critical in making the connections with the Lake Carriers.

A complete list of mooring buoy sites can be found here [HERE](#).

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center – The GLMHC is open for regular hours and has hosted numerous events including student groups, the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce lunch, Senator Peters and staff and a Huron Pines event.

Viking Cruises – There have been eight more cruise ship visits since the last meeting. Thunder Bay has become one of their favorite backup port stops when they can't get into their planned stop. Many SAC members have been helping with the cruise ship visits. Right now, there are 20 visits scheduled for 2023 and 2024. It is possible that the number of visits could rise because of the response we have been getting from the visitors and crew. The passengers and crew have been blown away by the hospitality of the community and the sanctuary staff. The sanctuary continues to work on community connections and using these opportunities as marketing for return vacationers.

Festival of Sail – The Festival of Sail was held on the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center's campus in July. It included tall ships and the world's largest rubber duck. The event drew visitors from all over the state. The sanctuary has received some questions about the cost of the tickets for the event. This festival was put on by an outside company, so we were not involved in setting the ticket price. They are planning to come back again and the sanctuary will work with the organizers at that time to try to get free tickets to local youth groups and organizations and also look at ways to make it more affordable for local residents to attend.

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center Campus – In 2019, the Friends of TBNMS had received a grant from the state of Michigan to do some improvements to the GLMHC campus, but that grant was pulled due to COVID. The sanctuary and the Friends of TBNMS are still working on portions of the project. Currently, there are basketball courts being installed back by the skate park and we are working on a shelter/pavilion by the *Lady Michigan* dock. Pattie Janes and her team worked on the beatification of the campus – painting the dive tank, planting flowers, etc.

Sanctuary Cinema – A groundbreaking ceremony was held last week for the new downtown cinema. During the ceremony Alpena Marc announced that it will be naming the theater “Sanctuary Cinema.” The sanctuary will work with the Alpena Marc team to include sanctuary messaging before the films shown at the theater.

Research Update:

Oil Spill Drill - Staff from Thunder Bay NMS and NOAA’s Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) participated in the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Oil Response Equipment Demonstration and Deployment Expo at the Calcite Quarry in Rogers City, Michigan. This workshop-style event was part of a larger Great Lakes oil spill response preparedness initiative undertaken by the U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, and private industry. Through this initiative, Great Lakes emergency response teams are working collaboratively to enhance interagency communication and cooperation to improve the region’s emergency readiness and response in the event of an oil spill in the Great Lakes. During the expo more than 200 attendees, representing several state and federal government agencies, universities, private companies and nonprofits, participated in presentations to showcase their organizations’ response tactics and resources, as well as potential limitations and challenges. Organizers also conducted an oil spill simulation during which several response teams demonstrated their water and air response assets. Moving forward, the conversations and relationships facilitated by this expo will be used to develop future actions and recommendations within the region’s emergency oil spill response plans.

Great Lakes Mussel Watch Survey - Felipe Arzayus from NOS Monitoring and Assessment has been working in the sanctuary collecting mussels as part of a national Mussel Watch Program focusing on the Great Lakes. They have been studying mussels since 1986 as an assessment for chemicals in the environment. This was their first visit back to Thunder Bay in seven years. When the study is complete there will be a report available to the public. Felipe estimated that it would take approximately six months for the samples to be processed at the labs, so it would take about a year before the final report is released.

NOAA Acidification Program - Over the summer, Thunder Bay staff began a new project partnering with NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory and NOAA Ocean Acidification Program working to create the first baseline study specific to freshwater acidification in Lake Huron. Sites will be established within the TBNMS management area in Lake Huron to record information relevant to tracking freshwater acidification and climate impacts. The monitoring network will include sensor deployment with the capability of detecting fine scale changes in freshwater pCO₂ and pH, as well as targeted water sampling and analysis (measurements for pH, dissolved inorganic carbon, and total alkalinity) from select locations coinciding with TBNMS resource sites to validate sensor accuracy and establish spatial variability within the region.

The results gained during this project will inform follow-up studies into climate-related impacts to sanctuary resources. It will improve the understanding of lake acidification and its potential impacts to natural and maritime heritage resources within the sanctuary and could be a model for management-focused monitoring of acidification throughout the Great Lakes. Procedures developed during project implementation will provide a framework for expanding climate monitoring to additional MPAs in the Great Lakes Region.

EDNA Project – Thunder Bay NMS is one of three sites around the world for a Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Underwater Innovation Study to Validate Environmental DNA (eDNA) technologies, techniques, and procedures for archaeological applications. This eDNA innovation study investigates the utility of environmental DNA sampling to detect human remains at submerged archaeological sites. A critical component of this study is development of methods for collection, processing and analysis of eDNA samples. The study includes three testbeds spanning a range of environmental conditions, chosen opportunistically and partially based on ongoing DPAA excavations. Samples will be collected in Saipan, Palermo and the Great Lakes. For each testbed, water and sediment samples from sites with and without known losses will allow for ground-truthing of eDNA methods. If successful, this study could influence DPAA investigation and excavation merit evaluation processes, and potentially excavation strategies and methods, by enabling DNA detection of human remains.

In the News –

The Bridge talked about NOAA mapping in the Great Lakes.

Staff are continuing their normal media appearances on local news outlets.

Bob Krafft mentioned the Great Lakes Now piece. It can be watched at <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2021/06/ap-noaa-wisconsin-coastline-national-marine-sanctuary-designated/>

Community Events

Rogers City Nautical Festival – Caleb O’Brien will be giving a talk about Sanctuary Shipwrecks on August 6 at 7:30pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ann-Marie Ruder moved here in 2012. Thank you all for contributing to putting Alpena on the map. You really should be proud, you’ve done a wonderful job.

R.C. Laugal started coming to the sanctuary 10 years ago as a student at Alpena Community College. She becomes more impressed with our community and isn’t surprised that this is the favorite cruise ship stop. Most welcoming places she’s ever traveled in Michigan.

Bob Krafft said that League of Michigan Bicycles held their annual event here. Bob helped host the welcome reception. The League’s director out of Lansing said to thank Andrew for being accommodating and nice to work with. They enjoyed their visit to the sanctuary.

Nancy Kinney – On July 27, there was a lecture on the Alpena-Amberly Ridge project by John O'Shea at the Grand Lake Branch library in Presque Isle which was well attended and enthusiastically received.

Don Gilmet - The recycling center received a notification from Senator Stabenow's office that they will be receiving funding to build a new center. He asked that the council members please help support this project. There will be example letters posted on the City's website for supporting this project. They have also worked out an agreement with Lafarge to take wine bottles.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.

2022 TBNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

September 20

November 8