

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- April 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: April 4 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Attendees

NOAA & Affiliates: Andrew Augustyn, John Bright, Ellen Brody (virtual), Stephanie Gandulla, Jeff Gray, Joey Jackson, Jason Luther, Daniel Moffatt, Jean Prevo, Cassandra Sadler, Kimberly Schultz, Sarah Waters

State of Michigan: n/a

NEMI/GLSI: n/a

SAC Members: Roger Baumgardner, Jim Dessenberg, Nancy Kinney, Janet Knisley-Simons, Don MacMaster, Eric Peace, Ann-Marie Ruder, Carol Shafto

SAC Alternates: Michael Beaulac, Pat Labadie, RC Laugal, Tim Lee, Merl Melton, Al Moe, Adam Poll, Chuck Wiesen

Non-voting Members: Beach Hall

United States Coast Guard: n/a

Media: n/a

Public: n/a

WELCOME AND ACTION ITEMS:

Vice-Chair Roger Baumgardner called the meeting to order. The council reviewed and approved the minutes from the November 8, 2022 council meeting.

Applications are currently being accepted for the following seats:

Business/Economic Development:

Don Newport
Bob Krafft – Alternate

Citizen-at-Large:
Carol Shafto
RC Laugal – Alternate

Jim Dessenberg
Rick Houchin - Alternate

Diving:
Steve Kroll
Bob Doyle - Alternate

Education (k-12):
Ann-Marie Ruder
Tim Lee – Alternate

Applications are due May 5. If you are on this list, just a reminder that you can only serve three consecutive terms in that position, but are welcome to apply for a different seat. Contact jean.prevo@noaa.gov if you have questions or would like to know how long you have served.

Staff phone numbers were recently updated and can be found on the website <https://thunderbay.noaa.gov/about/staff.html>.

PROPOSED LAKE ONTARIO NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY – Ellen Brody, Eastern Region Coordinator

Ellen Brody presented on the status of the proposed Lake Ontario NMS. The original nomination was submitted by four counties along Lake Ontario that shared a common vision of what it would mean to their area. The nomination was endorsed and supported by the Governor of New York.

Lake Ontario as the gateway to the Great Lakes:

- Influenced settlement, communication and lake commerce
- Created conflict and alliances
- Led to local boat-building traditions and salvage practices
- Indigenous history with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy comprised of six nations and tribes

NOAA’s proposal is to recognize the national significance of the area’s historical, archaeological and cultural resources and to manage this special place as part of the National Marine Sanctuary System.

Management plan is similar to Thunder Bay’s:

- Interpret the sanctuary's cultural, historical and educational value to the public
- Provide a national stage for promoting heritage tourism and recreation
- Document, explore and monitor the sanctuary's resources
- Manage the sanctuary through a regulatory and non-regulatory framework

In 2021, the draft environmental impact statement was published and included two boundary options. One included part of the St. Lawrence River along with some regulatory concepts to protect cultural resources. The final rule was published in January and based on feedback from the shipping community and other federal agencies in charge of navigation and safety, it was decided not to include the St. Lawrence area. Happy with the final decision which keeps the focus on the proposed area in Lake Ontario.

In the 1,724 square-mile boundary there are 43 known shipwrecks and one known aircraft and 20 potential shipwrecks and three more aircraft. There are a number of known shipwrecks that are only known to shipwreck explorers who have chosen not to share the coordinates of their locations.

Ellen shared some examples of some of the shipwrecks included in the boundary.

Lady Washington is the oldest known shipwreck in the proposed boundary (1797-1803) and is the oldest confirmed commercial sailing ship to be discovered in the Great Lakes. Built in Erie, PA; 53' long. In 1803, the sloop disappeared in a storm; presumed lost with all on board. Wreckage washed up near Oswego. Discovered by local shipwreck explorers in 2016. Wreck is largely intact with the mast still standing.

Queen of the Lakes – Canadian schooner (1858-1906). Built as a Canadian schooner for Great Lakes commerce, *Queen of the Lakes* operated throughout lakes Michigan, Erie, Huron and Ontario for nearly 50 years--an exceptional length of time for a schooner. During its lifespan, repairs were required every 15-20 years to ensure that the hull and machinery remained seaworthy. Despite these efforts, the schooner sprang a leak during a November storm in 1906 while returning to Kingston, Ontario with a cargo of coal. It was discovered in 2011 by local shipwreck explorers. The schooner has since been visited by technical divers, who report a remarkable state of preservation.

A pre-designation advisory council was established in March 2020. It's only the second proposed sanctuary to have a pre-designation council, Thunder Bay was the first. The council has had 18 virtual meetings and will hold their first in person meeting this summer. The council provided a valuable connection to the community during the pandemic because Ellen was unable to travel there.

Ellen highlighted some of the council accomplishments including:

- Wrote and passed resolution on Draft Management Plan
- Snowtown Film Festival partnership with Thunder Bay International Film Festival
- Winter/Spring Lecture Series
- Brainstorming future partnership opportunities
- Connecting Lake Ontario communities

Ellen reviewed the timeline of the proposed sanctuary process. The nomination was submitted and accepted on the inventory in 2017 and kicked off the official designation process in 2019. In the summer of 2021, there was a public review of Draft EIS/Draft Management, followed by the public

review of the proposed rule, January – March 2023. Hoping for the Finale EIS/MP and Rule and sanctuary designation in early 2024.

Addition of Lake Ontario means:

- Third Great Lakes NMS, covering 3 of 5 Great Lakes
- “Connect” the ocean to the Great Lakes
- Share Lake Ontario history, including Haudenosaunee Confederacy
- Bring new communities into the NMS System and explore connections among sanctuaries
- Strengthen stewardship ethic for Great Lakes

Questions:

Has there been any interest from the province of Ontario?

Yes, Parks Canada may be proposing a sanctuary that will be adjacent to this. Ellen is working with a team of master’s students at the University of Michigan to look for opportunities for connectivity, not just borders but also logical reasons.

Is Oswego the assumed place where a visitor center would be?

Oswego is the largest community and is the central point, so it is sort of the Alpena of the sanctuary, but the hope is to have a NOAA presence in all of the communities. Not sure what that will look like but would likely include programming at other museums and visitor centers.

It took a long time for the mooring buoy program to come to fruition in Thunder Bay. Lake Ontario is a busy section of the Great Lakes will this cause difficulties in the future?

That is the reason the section of the St. Lawrence River was not included. The Lake Carriers Association and the other federal safety agencies did support the current boundaries. Council member Eric Peace, who works for the Lake Carriers Association, said that they endorse the current boundaries and will work with the sanctuaries on which sites the buoys can be placed on. Continue to work on sharing the resources and developing good partnerships between the Coast Guard and the Lake Carriers.

For more information on the proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary, you can contact ellen.brody@noaa.gov or visit the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/lake-ontario/>.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION CAPITOL HILL VISIT –

Don MacMaster

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation invited representatives from three sites to travel to Capitol Hill to help advocate for the sanctuaries’ budget. Don MacMaster represented Thunder Bay and met with Michigan legislatures. Don found that the sanctuary is well-known and highly respected by Michigan legislatures.

EDUCATION UPDATE – Daniel Moffatt, Stewardship & Education Specialist

Daniel Moffatt joined our team last year; he was formerly an intern at the sanctuary in 2012.

Daniel started by congratulating Tim Lee for being awarded the 2023 Administrator of Year by the Michigan Science Teachers Association. We are happy to have Tim as part of our advisory council.

Daniel's position is funded by the three-year Walters Family Foundation grant awarded to the Friends which focuses on to developing tomorrow's environmental stewards. Daniel gave an overview of the education programs we have done since July 2022. Through these programs we are trying to enhance and add value to teacher's curriculum. Student driven stewardship projects. Finding many students have never been on a fieldtrip due to COVID shutdowns.

Highlights –

North Point Nature Preserve - One of the most ecologically significant regions in the Great Lakes basin, the peninsula provides critical habitat for rare species and is an important stopover point for migratory birds. North Point and the surrounding area are so valuable for biodiversity that a bi-national analysis identified it as one of only 26 "Biodiversity Investment Areas" in the Great Lakes region. There were six field trips last fall with over 100 students.

3rd Grade Get Into Your Sanctuary Field Trips – This program was developed with Alpena Public Schools bringing ever third grader through our doors four times. (257 students, 10 classrooms)

- Session 1 - Humans and the Great Lakes
- Session 2 - Maritime Archaeology
- Session 3 - Marine Technology and ROVs
- Session 4 - Shipwreck Cruise on the *Lady Michigan*

Virtual Reality on Alpena-Amberly Ridge - Alpena High school students offer site suggestions for Dr. O'Shea's 2023 summer field visits. They use headsets to walk on the virtual world. He did the same project with the students last year and it was very successful.

Michigan Vernal Pools Partnerships – We are working with the PIVOT program, an alternative education option for adjudicated youth. Two in-class sessions prior to a field day include introduction, purpose, scope, method, training and protocol. These sessions will help the students go into the field with confidence and understanding.

MATE Regional ROV Competition– The MATE Great Lakes Regional Competition will be happening at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center on May 20, 2023. Sarah Waters was the former coordinator but Daniel will be taking it over this year. Please contact Daniel if you would like to volunteer. The world championship will be hosted in Longmont, Colorado.

Upcoming Summer Learning Programs:

- Wonderful Watersheds
- Underwater Robot Academy
- Outside & Unplugged – This program will get high school students out to North Point to explore and have fun with no electronics.

Partners and visitors for these projects include:

West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science
Detroit Outdoors
4H Great Lakes & Natural Resources Camp
Boys & Girls Club of Michigan

Eric Peace said that one of the most important things the sanctuary does is the education programs. These education programs are a huge resource for kids around the Great Lakes' basin. It will pay off for all of us as this is the future. Great place to focus sanctuary efforts.

Feel free to reach out to Daniel.Moffatt@noaa.gov for more information on these programs.

SANCTUARY UPDATE:

Stephanie talked about the discovery of the *Ironton*. Media coverage from around the world. It was the third most popular news story in the entire world when it was released.

Research Update - Mooring Buoys will be deployed in the beginning of May. The buoy program is elevating and will share the institutional knowledge with Wisconsin and Lake Ontario. Thunder Bay staff will be helping Wisconsin deploy and set up their buoys.

Thunder Bay worked with the Coast Guard last summer for deploying buoys on deeper water wrecks. Starting phase one of that project in Wisconsin this summer.

Other upcoming 2023 field work:

- Federal initiative to benthic habitat mapping is a collaboration between many agencies to look at the lake bed, to develop project scopes to provide mapping operations. It will produce informative habitat maps. NOAA is a prime partner because of our vessels and equipment. EPA through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has elevated this project. Put a lot of funding and support into these mapping operations which will result in many sanctuary vessels getting new equipment.
- Working in the Apostle Islands this summer
- Middle Island sinkhole research is still happening, collecting samples and pictures
- Ocean acidification project is also ongoing. Updates will be provided at future meetings.
- Partner projects like work with UofM and Michigan Tech to deploy autonomous vehicles and collect data. Train them how to identify shipwrecks and other cultural objects.

Pure Award – Carol Shafto nominated the sanctuary for the State of Michigan's Pure Award. Thunder Bay won this award which recognizes Michigan organizations who have incorporated innovative and exemplary best practices in natural, cultural and heritage stewardship into their daily operations. Thunder Bay will be presented that award is at the Governor's Tourism Conference.

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center Lease – The lease has been signed for 20 more years. We are working on the next generation of exhibits for the visitor center.

Riverfront Development – Continue to work on the riverfront development project with the City of Alpena, Chamber of Commerce and Jeff Konczak. More updates on those projects in the coming months.

Viking Cruise Ship – There are 20 planned visits this summer.

Upcoming Events –

April 13: Lecture Series

May 1-5: ONMS Leadership Team Meeting in Alpena (Jean will send out more details for events that the SAC is invited to participate in)

May 2: Viking Ship

May 2: Sanctuary Cinema Sneak Peak

May 3: Alpena Chamber of Commerce – Leadercast will be in the theater

May 4: University of Michigan Road Scholars

May 11: Lecture – Jeff Thomas -The Ship That Time Forgot: The Sinking of the *Henry Steinbrenner*

May 20: MATE ROV Competition

June 20 –North Point Peninsula Celebration

June 22: Lecture – Dr. Katie Skinner

July 21-23: Festival of Sail

July 27: Lecture – Madalyn Saddler – Student Stewardship: Monitoring Freshwater Acidification in the Sanctuary

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Al Moe – The Michigan State DNR is holding a public comment meeting on April 11, from 6-8pm to talk about the state of the recreational fishing industry in Michigan. The decree agreement with the tribes expired in 2018 or 2019. That agreement eliminated gill fishing and now it is back to gill netting which is affecting the fishing in the lakes. Serious question on what impact it will have on lake trout and salmon. Anyone interested may attend.

Nancy Kinney – TNC 2022 Results Report – North Point got another mention.

Janet Knisley-Simons didn't receive the volunteer email. Resend out volunteer opportunities to the SAC.

Carol Shafto spoke about submitting the Pure Award which is an award for contribution of tourism in Michigan. It is amazing for the sanctuary to be chosen to receive it. Tourism was serendipitous to what we do. It was an opportunity for us to not only talk about tourism, but also talk about what we are really about. It's really exciting. Stephanie said she's been wanting this for years, so it was exciting for Carol to be able to give it to the sanctuary in honor of all the things the staff has given to the community.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

2023 TBNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

June 20

August 15

October 17

December 12