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NOAA's Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Announces New Diving and Maritime Heritage Representatives to its Advisory Council

NOAA's Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary today announced the appointment of members and alternates to two newly created seats on its advisory council representing diving and maritime heritage interests. The advisory council ensures public participation in sanctuary management and provides advice to the sanctuary superintendent.

The following individuals were named to fill open primary and alternate seats representing diving and maritime heritage:

Primary member (diving): Heather L. Knowles, Salem, Mass., president/co-founder of Northern Atlantic Dive Expeditions, Inc. and co-captain of the dive vessel *Gauntlet*. Knowles is a National Association of Underwater Instructors Technical Diving Instructor, holds full-cave diver certifications from the National Speleological Society – Cave Diving Section and National Association for Cave Diving, and is a member of the Boston Sea Rovers. During her 20 years of diving experience, she has led and participated in numerous expeditions to shipwrecks around Massachusetts Bay and in the sanctuary as well as the *Empress of Ireland*, *Bianca C*, *Andrea Doria*, U-869, RMS *Republic*, USS *Nezinscot* and *North American*.

Alternate member (diving): Robert W. Foster, Foxboro, Mass., founder of BostonDeepWrecks.com and director of marketing and business development with Environmental Health and Engineering. Foster has been diving since 1974 and last summer led the first diving expeditions to the wrecks of the collided coal schooners *Frank A. Palmer* and *Louise B. Crary* located in the sanctuary. During the past eight years he has also discovered and documented over 15 shipwrecks around Massachusetts Bay including the USS YF-415, *Brenton Reef* Lightship and *Augustus Snow*.

Primary member (maritime heritage): David S. Robinson, Jamestown, R.I., senior marine archaeologist/project manager with the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Robinson has served as principal investigator for multi-disciplinary projects involving cultural resources located in submerged, inter-tidal, and terrestrial environments throughout New England. He has 17 years of expertise in shipwreck archaeology, submerged settlements archaeology, marine geoarchaeology, archival research, artifact conservation, preservation planning, federal preservation laws and requirements, and public educational outreach. He is also a maritime studies program adjunct faculty member at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point.

Alternate member (maritime heritage): Mark C. Wilkins, Centerville, Mass, director/curator of the Cape Cod Maritime Museum. Wilkins has spent the last 25 years researching American maritime history and historically significant ships, such as the *Snow Squall* and the *Sparrow Hawk*. He is also vice president of the Cape and Islands Historical Association, acting curator of the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum, and member of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce and Hyannis Chamber of Commerce.

"Each of the members brings a unique perspective to the council based on his or her experience in the New England area, and we are excited to work with them to help guide the management of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary's maritime heritage resources," said Craig MacDonald, sanctuary superintendent. "With the help of the new members, the

sanctuary has the opportunity to become a world class diving destination, while protecting its fragile, non-renewable archaeological resources for future generations to study and enjoy.”

The Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Advisory Council, which has 17 voting members and six ex-officio members, was established in March 2001 to provide the sanctuary superintendent with advice on the sanctuary’s resource protection, research, education and outreach programs. Members serve in a volunteer capacity for two or three year terms, representing a variety of local stakeholder groups, state and federal government agencies, and the general public.

Council members were selected based on their expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they applied. Considerations included availability and commitment to active participation, knowledge of sanctuary resources, community and professional affiliations, views regarding the conservation and management of marine resources, and length of residence in the sanctuary area.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 842 square miles of ocean, stretching between Cape Ann and Cape Cod offshore of Massachusetts. Renowned for its scenic beauty and remarkable productivity, the sanctuary supports a rich assortment of marine life, including marine mammals, seabirds, fishes and marine invertebrates. The sanctuary’s position astride the historic shipping routes and fishing grounds for Massachusetts’ oldest ports also makes it a resting place for shipwrecks representing several hundred years of maritime transportation.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary: <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov>