

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE  
STELLWAGEN BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY  
DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

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1 (Proceedings commenced at 7:21 p.m.)

2 MR. MUNRO: Good evening, Craig.

3 My name is Mark Munro, address is 2329 Glasgo

1 Road in Griswold, Connecticut 06351, and I would like to  
2 thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on  
3 the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Draft  
4 Management Plan.

5 I'm a resident of Connecticut, a boat owner,  
6 with a vessel docked here in Mystic, and I'm a shipwreck  
7 enthusiast and diver.

8 Although I do not visit Stellwagen Bank  
9 regularly, I had the pleasure of diving and line fishing  
10 in the sanctuary for the first time last year. I also  
11 have colleagues who spend a great deal of time diving  
12 and recreational fishing in Stellwagen Bank.

13 I would first like to say that I wholly support  
14 a management plan for the Stellwagen Bank National  
15 Marine Sanctuary, and I'm encouraged by the progress the  
16 writers of the draft management plan have made towards  
17 protecting our biological and submerged cultural  
18 resources, from the benthic creatures that live in the  
19 sediment, to the birds that lie upon its surface, and  
20 all the animate and inanimate objects in between.

21 Given the condition of today's ocean  
22 environment, I think a resource management plan is  
23 needed. I hope great strides are made in stabilizing  
24 and improving Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary  
25 for current and future generations to enjoy.

26 Tonight, I'd like to speak as a diver, to the  
27 concerns I have with the (phonetic) draft management  
28 plan intends on protecting submerged cultural resources,

1 specifically shipwrecks. I want to consider a policy  
2 that severely limits a group of people who can, could,  
3 and would be a positive and vital resource to the  
4 Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

5 As an individual, I believe I can speak on the  
6 subject with a rational view, from both sides of the  
7 debate - the side that has concerns for the preservation  
8 of a fragile limited resource, and from the side that  
9 has an interest in visiting these fragile resources, two  
10 groups whose expertise would greatly compliment each  
11 other in a cooperative, constructive relationship.

12 My views on each side stem from having  
13 personally located at least 16 previously unknown  
14 shipwrecks in the waters around Connecticut, New York,  
15 Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and sharing the majority  
16 of my discoveries with NOAA, through submissions to the  
17 AOS database.

18 I've also volunteered with the RIMAPP, Rhode  
19 Island Marine Archaeology Program Project, working over  
20 a five-year period with marine archaeologists to  
21 document and protect submerged cultural resources in the  
22 waters around Newport, Rhode Island.

23 I am also very active in the local dive  
24 community, diving with people from the old school, that  
25 have been diving shipwrecks from the 1960s, to the newly  
26 certified.

27 I've also been working closely, as a contract  
28 employee, with American Underwater Search & Survey, with

1 John Fish and Arnie Carr, for the past three years.

2 I would like to contrast the draft management  
3 plan's assessment of two human activities within  
4 Stellwagen Bank: Commercial fishing and sport diving.

5 The draft management plan acknowledges the high  
6 impact commercial fishing in Stellwagen Bank has on  
7 submerged cultural resources, yet it does not seek to  
8 impose any restrictions on such a detrimental activity,  
9 and quotes from the draft management plan, which you  
10 mentioned earlier:

11 "Mobile fishing gear has had the greatest  
12 impact on maritime heritage resources.

13 Shipwrecks have been heavily impacted by  
14 fishing gear.

15 On an annual basis, virtually every square  
16 kilometer of the sanctuary is physically  
17 disturbed by fishing, to a greater or lesser  
18 degree, depending on the gear used."

19 The ongoing characterization of the sanctuary's  
20 maritime heritage resources continues to reveal the  
21 results of past damaging interactions between historic  
22 shipwrecks and fishing gear.

23 Fishing impacts and puts pressure on every  
24 resource in state in the sanctuary, whether it's  
25 biogenic, sea-floor habitats, marine mammals or  
26 shipwrecks.

27 In comparison, the draft management plan has  
28 one passage with regard to diving activities within

1       Stellwagen Bank, and admits it is a low to no impact  
2       activity, yet the draft management plan seeks to impose  
3       hefty, cumbersome restrictions to diving activities in  
4       Stellwagen Bank National Marine Park, including an  
5       access by permit policy for divers, a policy which I do  
6       not support.

7               The single negative passage on diving from the  
8       draft management plan is, and I quote:

9               "While diving on a shipwreck does not  
10              necessarily have negative impact, divers can  
11              cause structural damage through boat  
12              anchoring, grappling, tying to a shipwreck.  
13              Divers have also been known to remove  
14              artifacts."

15             Again, the draft management plan admits diving  
16       is a low to no-impact activity by stating:

17             "While diving on a shipwreck does not  
18             necessarily have negative impact."

19             The draft management plan states, "Divers can  
20       cause structural damage through boat anchoring,  
21       grappling, tying into a shipwreck," however, I know that  
22       the dive community would be more than willing to modify  
23       current techniques, or develop new techniques, in  
24       cooperation with NOAA, to be able to visit these  
25       historic sites within Stellwagen Bank National Marine  
26       Sanctuary.

27             In closing, I would like to say I believe the  
28       New England dive community has matured over the past 40

1 years, to the point that, if utilized, would be a very  
2 positive, vital, and active supporter of the sensible  
3 marine heritage program. Given the opportunity, dive  
4 charter operators are eager to employ techniques that  
5 will have zero impact on shipwrecks, yet will allow them  
6 to take visitors to the sites within Stellwagen Bank  
7 National Marine Sanctuary.

8 The success of the New York state policy of no  
9 artifact removal in New York state waters, and  
10 specifically the Great Lakes, shows that the dive  
11 community is willing to adhere to policies that allow  
12 everyone to enjoy and visit submerged historical sites.  
13 That community's interest in our maritime history is  
14 reflected in many published articles, magazines, books  
15 and TV programs available today, that are dedicated to  
16 shipwrecks and their stories.

17 I feel that given the opportunity, diver and  
18 dive operators visiting Stellwagen Bank could be willing  
19 and essential unpaid stewards of the successful national  
20 maritime sanctuary.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. MACDONALD: Thank you, very much.

23 What I failed to mention is that I -- when you  
24 get down to one minute, I'll probably, when you're at --  
25 When you're two minutes into the three, I'll just put up  
26 the one, and then when it's 30 seconds, 30.

27 Thank you, very much.

28 The next speaker is Kari Heinonen.

1 MS. HEINONEN: Hi. I'm Kari Heinonen. I  
2 reside at 111 Broadway Street, Colchester, Connecticut  
3 06415.

4 I've worked within the bounds of Stellwagen  
5 Bank National Marine Sanctuary for the past several  
6 years as a Ph.D. student at the University of  
7 Connecticut.

8 I have three main comments to make tonight.

9 One is that the National Marine Sanctuary, as  
10 stated, should serve to protect our marine resources.  
11 That said, all areas of the sanctuary are impacted by  
12 human activities. Even within the Western Gulf of Maine  
13 Closure, which prohibits bottom tending mobile fishing  
14 gear, recreational fishing and fixed (inaudible) is  
15 still allowed, and these certainly have impacts.

16 Now, that said, we can either accept the status  
17 quo, or move ahead with the management plan that's been  
18 proposed here in the draft, and I certainly hope that  
19 it's approved.

20 Just to continue with what the plan has  
21 proposed, there's action items, and within these action  
22 items, there are a number of research priorities, or  
23 even action priorities, and I don't think that pending  
24 approval of the plan should impact the progress that  
25 we're making with these activities.

26 That said, you know, moving forward with  
27 research, or projects that are investigating human  
28 impacts on the biodiversity or ecological integrity

1       within the sanctuary, can only help to arrange that  
2       policy when this plan is put forth, because as I  
3       understand it, this management plan, like any other, is  
4       a plan for a plan, and so, once approved, and -- then I  
5       -- as I understand it, there should be some type of  
6       policy actions that have to be mandated somewhere along  
7       the lines, and it wasn't clear when those would happen.

8               That said, I can only reiterate it, to just  
9       move ahead with some of the research that we have been  
10      doing, with the hopes that there will be enough  
11      information gathered, when it's time to implement the  
12      policy.

13             MR. MACDONALD:   Okay.   Thank you, very much.

14             Next here is Peter Auster.

15             MR. AUSTER:    You want my number?

16             MR. MACDONALD:   (No audible response.)

17             MR. AUSTER:    Okay.

18             My name is Peter Auster.   I live at 38 North  
19      Main Street in Chester, Connecticut.

20             By way of a full disclosure, I'm also a member  
21      of the Sanctuary Advisory Council, and I'm also -- and  
22      I'm on the faculty at the Department of Marine Sciences  
23      at University of Connecticut, and Science Director of  
24      the Undersea Research Center there.

25             In -- Up front, I want to say I support the  
26      alternative -- the preferred alternative of moving ahead  
27      with all the action plans.

28             To modify that, the idea that we have a place

1       that's called a "sanctuary," where demonstrably, every  
2       square kilometer is impacted by human uses, is a bit of  
3       a nonsequitor, and while the management plan puts forth  
4       a range of action plans that ultimately develop actions  
5       for conservation on the ground, I'm disappointed, and  
6       I've said this throughout the process, that this doesn't  
7       go far enough to lay out a series or set of alternatives  
8       of actions, for which we can have a public discussion  
9       about what a sanctuary should be, whether here in New  
10      England -- Well, the case at hand is the one here in New  
11      England, but throughout the system, national marine  
12      sanctuaries, so we can get to the point of defining what  
13      "resource protection" means at any of these sites,  
14      because there's a -- the fact that this process has gone  
15      on for ten years, and because there's been a wide  
16      gradient of views on what should and should not be  
17      happening in the sanctuary, having this -- having a  
18      public discussion about what we should do, based on a  
19      set of specific alternatives, I think, is the quickest  
20      way to move us forward, but certainly, this plan lays  
21      the foundation for doing that.

22                Thank you.

23                MR. MACDONALD: Okay. Thank you, very much.

24                The next speaker is Eric Smith.

25                MR. SMITH: Thank you. Evening.

26                My name is Eric Smith. I'm Director of the  
27      Marine Fisheries Division for the Connecticut Department  
28      of Environmental Protection.

1           First, I'd like to congratulate you on -- and  
2 your whole group, for pulling together a very wide array  
3 of information, and presenting it in a very clear  
4 manner, both in the presentation and the documents on  
5 the website. That's a hard thing to do, and I think you  
6 did it well.

7           I'm a fishery manager. Fishery management is  
8 protection of resources, and also preservation of  
9 fisheries, and that's also a difficult balance to  
10 strike, and in that light, I have to say I was chagrined  
11 and even disappointed in the document and the  
12 characterization of fisheries.

13           There are a lot of charged terms in there.  
14 Only one example, to use the term, "old growth," kind of  
15 gives you the vision of an old redwood forest. You  
16 know, large fish are taken by fisheries everywhere, not  
17 just on Stellwagen. It's kind of abusing. Those terms  
18 almost seem to be waiving a red flag, which I think is  
19 unfortunate, because I think in places in New England,  
20 you're gonna have more apprehension develop than maybe  
21 really needs to, because I think overall, the plan kind  
22 of sets a tone to look forward into the future, but if  
23 you make enemies, now you got to fight your enemies, and  
24 it just doesn't seem productive to do that.

25           I think it's a little bit presumption --  
26 presumptive to suggest that we can't have fisheries and  
27 biodiversity. I don't know -- I think that's a false  
28 premise. I think you need to manage fisheries, and

1 that's what we're engaged in. It doesn't mean that you  
2 can't have a biologically diverse community at the same  
3 time. So, I don't think they're incompatible.

4 This is a draft management plan. I hope, as  
5 you develop it into final form, that you maybe tone it  
6 down some, in respect to the comments I've just made  
7 because, again, I don't think some of the wording is  
8 productive, and I think it's actually counterproductive.

9 Thanks.

10 MR. MACDONALD: Thank you, very much.

11 The next speaker would be Kara Johnson.

12 MS. JOHNSON: My name is Kara Johnson. My  
13 address is 64 Dexter Street, Providence, Rhode Island  
14 02906.

15 As an avid diver and whale biologist, I've been  
16 to Stellwagen Bank a number of times to study the  
17 various animals there, and the diverse species, and one  
18 of my biggest concerns is addressing by-catch issues,  
19 and maintaining the food source for the large whales.

20 There is currently, in your report, 23 percent  
21 by-catch, and I think that there could be a lot more  
22 research and development to focus on reducing that by-  
23 catch, and that would help alleviate some of the  
24 tensions between the treaties (phonetic), as well as  
25 conservation managers.

26 Another issue I have is with the whale watch  
27 regulations, in that it's -- your plan states that -- to  
28 develop a better working relationship with whale

1       watchers and whale watch captains, and that really does  
2       need to have some enforcement behind it, as well.

3               Currently, there is no enforcement out on the  
4       water. Very, very few times have I ever been on the  
5       water and seen any patrol boats, and I think there needs  
6       to be more resources devoted towards the enforcement of  
7       these policies, as well.

8               Thank you.

9               MR. MACDONALD: Okay. Thank you, very much.

10              Next speaker is Steve Wojcicki.

11              MR. WOJCICKI: Probably getting sick of seeing  
12       me, aren't you?

13              My name is Steve Wojcicki. I'm a day dragger  
14       fisherman out of Gloucester, Mass. I live in Hampton  
15       Falls, New Hampshire.

16              I just drove down here, a hundred and fifty  
17       miles, to say what I want to say, and that is that for  
18       all of you people that think that there isn't a  
19       management plan in process already, you couldn't be any  
20       further from the truth because we've been under strict  
21       management for ten years, and what I'd like to show you  
22       is some of the stuff that he's proposed on this -- the  
23       area of the bank.

24              A lot of this area is already closed to  
25       commercial fishing. This area, right here, is Closed  
26       Area 2, 3, and 5. It's closed four months out of the  
27       year. It extends beyond Stellwagen. It extends almost  
28       a hundred miles offshore.

1           April 1st through May 31st is springtime, which  
2           is very productive fishing for that time of the year,  
3           and then again, in October 1st through November 30th,  
4           another two months.

5           So, that's four months out of the year that  
6           Stellwagen is closed to any type of commercial fishing,  
7           other than lobster fishing. We can't go out and fish  
8           there then, and as you can see, his area of the  
9           sanctuary overlaps this line here. It is the Western  
10          Gulf of Maine Jeffries Ledge Closure. That's been  
11          closed for ten years. We haven't been able to go in  
12          there and fish for any type of species, other than  
13          lobsters.

14          Recreational people are allowed in there.  
15          Party recreational are allowed in there, but commercial  
16          fishing does not take place beyond this line, right  
17          here, to the east. It's been closed ten years, and we  
18          will never, ever get back into that area, and that area  
19          extends way to the north, further into the Gulf of  
20          Maine, off the coast of Kennebunkport, Maine. The  
21          entire ledge is closed. All we get to fish is just the  
22          very front edge of it, when you first get to it.

23          This area here, is Closed Area 2, 3, 4. This  
24          area is closed for three months out of the year in the  
25          springtime, from April 1st until the 30th of June, and  
26          this extends beyond the Jeffries Ledge Closure, as well,  
27          the Western Gulf of Maine Closure.

28          So, if you add these three months, and these

1 four months, there's seven months worth of rolling  
2 closures that go by, year after year, that we have to  
3 deal with, and we don't get to do anything. I got to  
4 tie my boat up, and I can't go fishing, period, and like  
5 I said, the Jeffries Ledge area, year round, doesn't  
6 open again for us.

7 So, if you think there's no management  
8 happening, it's -- you're wrong, but I have some other  
9 things here I'd like to explain too, and set that down.

10 (Pause.)

11 I just came down here tonight to try and let  
12 the people know, because this is the third meeting that  
13 I've been to. I went to the meeting at Gordon College.  
14 I went to the Portsmouth, New Hampshire meeting. Now,  
15 I'm down here, and not one of those meetings was the  
16 public informed of any of the restrictions and  
17 management that is already in place, and has been in  
18 place for ten years.

19 The commercial fisherman has been targeted  
20 heavily for ten years, and it's getting to the point  
21 now, where it almost doesn't even seem like it's about  
22 protecting the fish, it's about getting rid of the  
23 fisherman, and that's how I feel when I walk into these  
24 meetings, I just -- totally attacked, stereotyped as a,  
25 "Reckless, careless rapist of the sea." You couldn't be  
26 any further from the truth.

27 I mean, all I am, I'm a fisherman. I -- I'm a  
28 harvester of a food resource, a very valuable food

1 resource, high-protein food resource, the most healthy  
2 food that you can eat, and I go to sea every day, risk  
3 my life, and I bring it back to shore so that it can be  
4 dispersed throughout the communities for people to eat,  
5 and I know all of you enjoy eating it. You can't tell  
6 me that you don't because everybody does, but I'm not a  
7 pirate. I'm not a bandit. I'm just as fascinated by  
8 the whales, and all the other sea life that's out there,  
9 as anybody in this room right now.

10 I get to see it much more often than you do,  
11 and if you think I'm riding around out there in my boat,  
12 upset because the whales are swimming around me, or a  
13 dolphin swims by or, you know, something like that, I  
14 mean, it's totally wrong, and I just want you people to  
15 know that commercial fishermen are much more caring than  
16 what a lot of the public perceive us to be.

17 The closed areas are a big thing. They really  
18 do have a huge impact on the fishermen themselves, our  
19 livelihoods. You know, we all have families. We have  
20 boats to pay for. We got mortgages on houses that we  
21 have to pay for, rising fuel costs. We're not making a  
22 whole lot of money when these closures come by every  
23 single year.

24 Some of the other things is the days at sea  
25 issue on our permits. I have a federal permit. My  
26 permit has 48 days a year that I'm allowed to go ground  
27 fishing, 48 out of 365.

28 When I go to sea, they count my hours. They

1 count my hours at a rate of two to one. If I'm out for  
2 five hours, it costs me ten. If I'm out for ten, it  
3 costs me 20. If I'm out for 24, it cost me 48.

4 I'm required to have a piece of electronics on  
5 the boat, which is a satellite communicator. It's  
6 called a "VMS", a Vessel Monitoring System. What that  
7 does, is that senses -- keeps me in communication with  
8 National Marine Fishery Service through satellite. They  
9 know where I am every minute of every day, which  
10 direction I'm going, how fast I'm going. If I'm just  
11 idling around the harbor, they know it as soon as I  
12 leave the pier.

13 With that VMS, every day, before I leave the  
14 pier, I have to have a computer on the boat, I have to  
15 send an e-mail to National Marine Fishery Service, a  
16 request to go to work for the day.

17 I have to ask permission to go do my job. I'm  
18 self-employed. I mean, I own my own boat, I operate my  
19 own business, but I've got to get permission every day,  
20 before I can even leave the pier, and I have to sit and  
21 wait, and when I send that e-mail, it could be 2:00  
22 o'clock in the morning, I have to sit and wait for  
23 acknowledgment to come back to my vessel, allowing me to  
24 set sail and go fishing for the day.

25 If I get down to my boat, and for some stupid  
26 reason my computer doesn't want to boot up, and I can't  
27 operate my VMS, even though the VMS will always be  
28 working and sending its signal, they know where I am. I

1 have a green light that flashes on that box, and I know  
2 that it's working, but if my computer doesn't want to  
3 work, I cannot go fishing until I get my computer  
4 repaired.

5 There's no phone number that I can call to make  
6 my declaration, like there used to be. We used to do it  
7 all through phone, then they made the VMS mandatory.

8 (Unintelligible) clock, I explained.

9 The catch limits. This girl was talking about  
10 the by-catch. Twenty-three and 25 percent, to me, if  
11 you could come on my boat and go fishing with me for the  
12 day, and see what actually gets caught as by-catch, I  
13 would prove to you that 25 percent is a large number.

14 The net sizes that we have to fish with, that  
15 we're required to use, six and six-and-a-half-inch mesh,  
16 is the biggest mesh requirement around the world. No  
17 other country has to use the size mesh that we use,  
18 none.

19 A lot of people think that -- like I just said,  
20 that we have 48 days, but so many people still believe  
21 that this is a seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365  
22 days a year that we're out there fishing on these  
23 grounds, and it's not so. I mean, most guys are barely  
24 making it, simply because of the time restrictions that  
25 we have.

26 Like I said, 48 days, times two, at two to one.  
27 Basically, I've got 25 -- I've got 24 days that I can  
28 budget throughout the course of the year.

1           I've gone over the fact how it's a very  
2 important food resource. I mean, I believe that God put  
3 this resource on this earth for us to harvest, so that  
4 we can all eat. If we don't eat, we starve, we die, and  
5 that's what this resource is here for, and to think that  
6 this area is not being protected, and that it needs to  
7 be protected more, when it has such -- it's such a great  
8 resource, and the amount of fish there is so important  
9 to all the communities that surround the shore in  
10 Massachusetts, anywhere, all the New England states, and  
11 I just -- I hate to see that resource be taken away so  
12 that nobody can enjoy fresh seafood from the North  
13 Atlantic, our cold water seafood, not warm water  
14 seafood, not grouper, not mahi mahi, because those fish  
15 are good, but nothing is as good as the haddock, the  
16 cod, the flounder, the scallops that we catch here, off  
17 the coast of New England. It's a very, very important  
18 resource.

19           I -- Like I said, I'm tired of being  
20 stereotyped as a guy who's out there destroying things,  
21 and just beating up the bottom, taking something away  
22 from everybody else, because that's not what I do.

23           I'm proud of what I do. I go to sea every day.  
24 Like I said, I bring food to shore for all of you to  
25 eat, and it does not seem that I get the least bit of  
26 respect for that anymore, and I'm tired of it.

27           You know, I can -- I stand up here right now,  
28 and I'm trying to keep my cool, but I'm telling you, I

1       could blow my stack real easy, and I could say a lot of  
2       things, but that's only because I've been under attack  
3       for ten years.

4                I've been fishing for 21 years. The  
5       regulations have been in place for over ten years now  
6       and, I mean, the people are just not being well enough  
7       informed through these meetings, to let them know that  
8       there is an immense amount of management being placed on  
9       the fisherman right now. It's what we call  
10      "micromanagement," because they no sooner put something  
11      into place, and they want to move on, and they want to  
12      make the restrictions even more strict than what they  
13      are. They don't seem to give anything a chance to work,  
14      and it just doesn't seem fair to me, as a hard-working  
15      guy.

16             Like I said, I'm not a rapist. I'm out there  
17      doing my thing. I love what I do, and it's getting  
18      broken down, and it's not the fault of the fisherman.  
19      It's got nothing to do with the numbers of fish there,  
20      because I'll tell you what, we're catching more fish  
21      now, in a shorter period of time, than -- It's like the  
22      old days.

23             I don't believe the stocks were ever depleted.  
24      What I think is happening is that management people, the  
25      National Marine Fisheries, NOAA, just -- they're trying  
26      to reduce the number of fishermen out there, and until  
27      they get the numbers where they want them to be, they  
28      are not gonna let up on any of the restrictions, but

1       it's about time that I feel that they start to give a  
2       little bit back, because we've made huge sacrifices in  
3       the last ten years, and if they continue to go the route  
4       that they're going, we're gonna lose the resource, and  
5       nobody's gonna be eating fresh seafood, nobody's gonna  
6       be able to enjoy it.

7                I think that of all the negativity that Mr.  
8       MacDonald here, -- Is that you're name?

9                MR. MACDONALD   (No audible response.)

10              MR. WOJECKI:  -- seems to be spreading, about  
11       how devastating the impact is that the fisherman has at  
12       the bottom, I think the fish would have been gone 300  
13       years ago.

14              I know he showed you the chart.  That was 400  
15       years old, from the 1600s, and there was good fishing on  
16       Stellwagen back then.  Years later, they made another  
17       chart, and the fishing was even better.  Here we are,  
18       400 years later, and the fishing is still good there.  
19       So the impacts that he says that we're having on these  
20       grounds is misleading, and it hasn't been proven.

21              So, I think if you want to try and protect some  
22       heritage here, you should start thinking about  
23       protecting the fishermen, because there are four --  
24       there's 400 years of heritage there, that seems to be  
25       getting thrown away, that nobody cares about.

26              Like I said, I just drove a hundred and fifty  
27       miles to get down here, to stand up here and speak my  
28       peace because I am tired of being beat down.  I'm tired

1 of it, and I don't deserve it.

2 Nobody thanks me for what I do. Very few  
3 people at these meetings have walked up to me and said,  
4 "Hey, you're doing a great job. I love what you do and,  
5 you know, I couldn't do it," and so many people couldn't  
6 do it, but I do it, and I do it every day, and I do it  
7 by myself.

8 I don't even take a crew. My boat's 42 feet  
9 long. I pull a tiny little net. I got tiny little  
10 doors (phonetic). I am not a threat that this guy wants  
11 you to think that I am. I just -- I can't stress that  
12 enough, but like I said, I want people to really know --  
13 I want everybody to know the full story here, because  
14 he's only giving half of the story.

15 He's not telling you about the management's  
16 plans that have been in place for ten years, and they're  
17 working, and I know that this guy right here, inside, I  
18 can tell by just listening to him talk, that I think he  
19 kind of feels the same way, and I think he's tired of  
20 seeing the commercial fisherman being beat down by  
21 groups of people who have been misled and are not fully  
22 informed and, you know, I'm not trying to take anything  
23 away from anybody that wants to be there, but for four  
24 months out of the year this place is closed.

25 I mean, they can research in April and May.  
26 They can research in October and November. They can  
27 dive in April and May. They can dive in October and  
28 November when we're not there. They've got the whole

1 place to themselves, but there still needs to be a  
2 harvest happening here, because this is a valuable  
3 resource, economically and as a food resource, as a  
4 healthy food resource and, you know, all these things  
5 need to be brought up, and they're not being -- I went  
6 to three of these meetings, and none of this stuff was  
7 talked about, and that's what's really got me mad, and  
8 if there was another meeting tomorrow night, or the next  
9 night, I'd be there doing the same thing, because my  
10 livelihood depends on it, myself, my wife and family. I  
11 get the same things that you people have, and if  
12 somebody came to you and said, "You got to take four  
13 months off. Go find something else to do. If you want  
14 to go to work, you make a phone call and we'll let you  
15 know if you can go to work."

16 Every day, this is what I deal with, and I want  
17 everybody to know. I'm gonna spread my word. Mr.  
18 MacDonald's been spreading his. I'm gonna do everything  
19 I can to make sure that I'm still gonna be allowed to do  
20 what I love to do in this area.

21 It's written in the document, that commercial  
22 fishing will always be allowed in this area, and with  
23 what I just said, if all you people are gonna push,  
24 push, push, and push me out of business, I'm gonna do  
25 everything I can to fight them. I -- I'm not gonna let  
26 you break me down and take my livelihood away from me,  
27 simple as that.

28 As I said, I got -- all of these areas right

1 here, everything that's orange, year-round closure,  
2 never to open again to commercial fishing. This is all  
3 you people don't know.

4 MR. MACDONALD: Steve, I do have to ask you to  
5 --

6 MR. WOJCICKI: Yeah.

7 MR. MACDONALD: -- wrap things up.

8 MR. WOJCICKI: This is your last meeting. I'm  
9 not done talking.

10 It's -- Although this is the closed area that I  
11 showed you, it extends all the way out, almost to the  
12 Hague line. It's four miles offshore. Happens every  
13 year, two months.

14 Area 4 goes above the cape there, all the way  
15 out to the Western Gulf of Maine Closure, and that  
16 extends all the way to the Hague line, closed three  
17 months.

18 Area 5, again. It happens again. This is the  
19 October/November time that it closes, and like I said,  
20 all the orange, closed year round, cannot go there.

21 I don't know what else to say, but I know  
22 everybody's got their fees (phonetic), and everybody  
23 wants to be able to go to this area that's the so-called  
24 "sanctuary," but I don't believe in kicking a group of  
25 people out, that have been around for 400 years,  
26 bringing food to the shore for people to eat, helping to  
27 sustain the human race, versus sustaining what's  
28 happening on the bottom of the ocean, sponges and

1 plankton. I mean whales.

2 I love the whales. Like I said, I'm just as  
3 fascinated as you are by them, but if we run into a lot  
4 of trouble at shore, do you think them whales are gonna  
5 swim ashore, sprout legs and come to our rescue? I hate  
6 to say it like that, but that's the truth, and that's  
7 the bottom line. I mean, we're all people here, and I  
8 want to get respect, and I want to be thanked for what I  
9 do, you know, and I'm just tired of being ridiculed and  
10 beat down by this guy, and I don't believe in him,  
11 because I'm for you. I'm for all of you, and that's why  
12 I do what I do.

13 It makes me feel good when I come in and I  
14 unload my catch, and I know that what I did all day out  
15 there, busting my rear end, risking my life by myself,  
16 that I brought food to shore for people to eat.

17 Like I said, I don't get any respect, and I'm  
18 pissed.

19 MR. MACDONALD: Okay. Thank you, very much.

20 Are there anybody -- Let's see. I don't have  
21 any other names on this list.

22 If there's anybody else that wanted to offer  
23 comments this evening?

24 (No audible response.)

25 Well, if not, what I'd like to do is thank all  
26 of you for coming -- Oh, there's one more?

27 MR. FENNEMORE: Hi everyone. My name is Rafael  
28 Fennemore. I'm an undergraduate marine science major at

1 Boston University, and I've been at these meetings  
2 before.

3 I've never felt I want to say anything, and I  
4 guess I want to start off by saying that anything I say  
5 here does not reflect anything on Stellwagen at all.  
6 It's just my own opinion, and I've only been working at  
7 Stellwagen for a couple weeks, honestly. I'm 21, you  
8 know, (inaudible) scientist here.

9 But I grew up in Maine. I grew up in Belfast,  
10 a small town on the coast. My father worked at Stinson  
11 Seafood Factory (inaudible) sardines, and sardine -- I  
12 don't know if you guys know, sardine industry kind of  
13 collapsed up there, shut down everything.

14 Belfast is a poor town, right on the coast.  
15 It's a -- Fishing is huge up there, and nobody said,  
16 "Take four months off," and nobody even said, "Sorry,"  
17 and now my father's a waiter, and honestly, he couldn't  
18 be happier. He loves it. He loves what he does, and  
19 for that, he's my idol, and I -- truly, honestly, and I  
20 don't know, I think it's harsh. I think change sucks,  
21 but I think that life, a lot of industries, fishing, is  
22 a natural resource that humans just tend to deplete,  
23 just by what we do, and like Irish potato famine,  
24 California gold rush, that kind of stuff, it's not gonna  
25 last, and it's gonna call for a change, and it's gonna  
26 destroy people's lives, and my view is there's some  
27 lives, and their family's planning on their legacy, and  
28 all that, but I think in the bigger picture, it's

1 something that needs to happen, and whether it's, you  
2 know, NOAA putting down regulations, or anything like  
3 that, I think that it's important for biological  
4 integrity, to take such measures, and people have a very  
5 non-animalistic view of themselves, and honestly, we  
6 think we're better than anything else and, you know, we  
7 can control it, you know, and that's great, you know,  
8 but sometimes it's not the most important thing, and  
9 honestly, you know, the world is gonna continue.

10 Like, whether there is people in it or not,  
11 whether people deplete this resource or that resource,  
12 whatever we take down with us, you know, but I think  
13 that trying to preserve ecological integrity is --  
14 really should be everyone's top priority, honestly, and  
15 I'm sorry, for what it's worth.

16 That's all I've got to say.

17 MR. MACDONALD: Okay. Thank you, very much.

18 Are there any other comments this evening?

19 Is this -- Okay.

20 MS. JOHNSON: (Inaudible.)

21 MR. MACDONALD: Okay.

22 Well, this will be the last comment then, of  
23 the evening, if that's okay with everybody.

24 MS. JOHNSON: I just wanted to, because I  
25 forgot about the dynamic area management for -- that  
26 addresses specifically white whales and humpbacks, and  
27 the gill net fishery.

28 It's sort of been proven in the past number of

1 years, that dynamic area management does not work, and  
2 that it creates more of a hassle to try to notify the  
3 fishermen that they need to get their gear out of that  
4 area, in order to deal with the right whales being  
5 there, and I think that if we could do more of a  
6 seasonal area management, which at least gives people  
7 forewarning, then that will help alleviate some of the  
8 hostilities on both sides, but again, both sides need to  
9 work together.

10 The fisheries, the conservationists, and the  
11 managers are stuck in the middle, trying to mediate both  
12 sides, but if everyone is at the table and able to help  
13 come up with a solution, then I think we'll have a  
14 better chance of finding a solution that everyone will  
15 agree with, but it does need to have the involvement of  
16 all sides at the table, very similar to the lobster  
17 management up in the northern Gulf of Maine, which has  
18 been very well -- a very good success story.

19 MR. MACDONALD: Okay. Thank you, very much.

20 (Proceedings concluded at 8:00 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript  
25 from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings  
26 in the above-entitled matter.

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July 1, 2008

1       STEPHEN C. BOWLES

2       Court Reporter

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