



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE  
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary  
175 Edward Foster Road  
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066  
Tel: 781.545.8026 Fax: 781.545.8036

**47th SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**June 1, 2016 9:30 am-3:00 pm**  
**NOAA GARFO, Gloucester MA**  
**MINUTES of MEETING**

**Present:**

Bill Adler	Primary:	Fixed Gear Commercial Fishing
Jennifer Anderson	Federal:	NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
Michelle Bachman	Federal:	New England Fishery Management Council
Shelley Brown	Alternate:	At Large
Todd Callaghan	State:	MA Coastal Zone Management
LCDR Ian Callander	Federal:	First US Coast Guard District
Deborah Cramer	Primary:	At Large
Tracey Dalton	Primary:	Research
Rich Delaney	Primary:	Education (SAC Chair)
Tim Donovan	Federal:	NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
Susan Farady	Primary:	Education
John Galluzzo	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Heather Gaughan	Alternate:	Youth
Laura Howes	Primary:	Whale Watch
Martin Klein	Alternate:	Maritime Heritage
Heather Knowles	Primary:	Diving (SAC Vice Chair)
Joseph Levine	Alternate:	Research
Marissa Marcoux	Alternate:	Diving
Chris McGuire	Alternate:	Conservation
Wayne Petersen	Alternate:	Conservation
David Pierce:	State:	MA Division of Marine Fisheries
Michael Pierdinock	Primary:	Recreational Fishing
Kevin Powers	Primary:	At Large
Charlie Rasak	Primary:	Business Industry
Bob Rocha	Alternate:	Education
LT Phil Desroches	Federal:	MA Environmental Police
Mason Weinrich	Primary:	Research
John Williamson	Primary:	At Large (SAC Secretary)

**SBNMS Staff:**

Craig MacDonald	Anne Smrcina	Sara Hutto, GFNMS
Ben Cowie-Haskell	Elizabeth Stokes	
Matthew Lawrence	Nathalie Ward	

**I. Welcome, Review of Agenda and Approval of 46<sup>th</sup> SAC Minutes (R. Delaney)**

The 46th SAC Minutes were approved with one correction: Michelle Bachman was added as an attendee at the 46th SAC meeting in Rockland MA. The 47th SAC agenda was approved.

## **II. SAC Business (N. Ward)**

### **i. Welcome New Recruitments:**

- Dr. Shelley Brown, At Large alternate, is the Education Director for the ocean conservation organization, Sailors for the Sea.
- Tim Donovan, Federal Ex-Officio member, is currently the Acting Assistant Director of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement Northeast Enforcement Division.
- Heather Gaughan, Youth Primary member, is a Scituate High School student and a volunteer at SBNMS.

ii. Recruitments: The last round of SAC recruitments closed on May 31st. Selectees likely will not be announced until late June or July time frame. The next SAC recruitment will be announced on August 1st, with an August 31st application deadline.

iii. SAC Meetings: The next SAC meeting will be on Wednesday, 5 October at the Plymouth Yacht Club.

iv. Council photos and bios should be submitted to Elizabeth Stokes by 15 June.

## **III. Council Round Robin (R. Delaney)**

SAC members introduced themselves and provided updates on issues within their respective organizations. The Council Round Robin is very informative, originally intended as a short snapshot from each member's organization. If a SAC member wants their Round Robin write-up included in the SAC Minutes, please email it to [Nathalie.Ward@noaa.gov](mailto:Nathalie.Ward@noaa.gov) and [Elizabeth.Stokes@noaa.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Stokes@noaa.gov).

## **IV. Elections of Executive Committee (N. Ward)**

The following members were unanimously elected to the following Executive Committee seats:

- Heather Knowles, Chair: 2-year term (replaces Rich Delaney)
- Rich Delaney, Vice Chair: 2-year term (replaces Heather Knowles)
- John Galluzzo, Secretary: 1-year term (replaces John Williamson)

Craig MacDonald thanked John Williamson for his devoted service over these many years. John has served on the SAC for almost as long as the SAC has been in existence and has served in many capacities and his extraordinary efforts over these many years and his tenure are greatly appreciated.

## **V. Update on the Northeast Ocean Plan (B. Nicholson, NOAA National Ocean Service)**

On May 25, the draft Northeast Ocean Plan was released for public comment, enabling more transparent, informed, and coordinated ocean decisions for New England waters. Through the Northeast Ocean Data Portal, the plan features unprecedented data access to assist with wise regulatory and management decisions. Its “best practices” guidance will encourage better coordination across government and stronger engagement by stakeholders in management decisions. The public comment period—to include nine meetings as well as online and written feedback—will be important in plan revisions and the submittal to the National Ocean Council in

September 2016. This plan reflects three and one-half years of collaboration among the public and the federal, state, tribal, and New England Fishery Management Council members of the Northeast Regional Planning Body. NOAA has served as the federal co-lead on behalf of the Department of Commerce. See the plan [here](#).

*Significance:* The draft Northeast Ocean Plan is the first in the nation to be released under the National Ocean Policy. It signifies a tangible accomplishment for the Obama Administration and a major step toward practicing ecosystem-based management.

What does the plan do?

- Enables regional characterization of marine life, habitat and human activities using unprecedented online library of peer-reviewed regional data
- Sets expectation for the federal government to use this information to guide and inform regulatory and management decisions within existing authorities
- Supports identification of potential conflicts, compatibility, and affected resources
- Employs best practices for regulatory/management processes through interagency coordination, stakeholder engagement, and use of data
- Identifies future priority science and research needs

Public comment:

- Public comment period began May 25th and will conclude on July 25th at 5pm
- Public comment will be collected via:
  - Public listening sessions
  - Comments submitted online at [neoceanplanning.org/plan](http://neoceanplanning.org/plan)
  - Via email: [comment@neoceanplanning.org](mailto:comment@neoceanplanning.org)
  - Comments submitted in writing to:  
Betsy Nicholson, Northeast Regional Planning Body, 55 Great Republic Drive,  
Gloucester, MA 01930
- The RPB will submit revised plan to National Ocean Council for review and certification, at which point the plan will be in effect

Public meeting schedule:

Monday, June 6 – Rockland, ME: 5PM to 8PM  
Wednesday, June 8 – Old Lyme, CT: 7PM – 9PM  
Monday, June 13 – Gloucester, MA: 6PM-8:30PM  
Tuesday, June 14 – Boston, MA: 2PM – 4:30PM  
Wednesday, June 15 – New Bedford, MA: 6PM – 8:30PM  
Monday, June 20 – Ellsworth, ME: 5PM – 8PM  
Monday, June 27 – Portsmouth, NH: 6PM – 8:30PM  
Wednesday, June 29 – Narragansett, RI: 6PM – 8:30PM  
Thursday, June 30 – Portland, ME: 5PM – 8PM  
Go to [neoceanplanning.org](http://neoceanplanning.org) for details

## **VI. Working Luncheon. Northeast Ocean Plan Baseline Assessment (H. Kite-Powell, Marine Policy Center, WHOI)**

The Northeast Region, for ocean planning purposes, includes the coastal counties of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and the New York counties of Queens, Bronx, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester. The coastal and marine natural resources and coastal infrastructure of the Northeast Region, and the economic activities and cultural/recreational services that rely them, directly and indirectly support more than 500,000 jobs and \$40 billion in

economic value (GDP) per year (2013 data) in the region. This represents about 2% of the region's overall economy. In addition, US Navy and Coast Guard activities in the region support more than 10,000 jobs and account for billions of dollars per year in federal expenditures in the region. The region's coastal and ocean resources also generate significant ecosystem service value in the region and beyond; these values are not well quantified. Coastal and marine recreation and tourism account for about half of the region's ocean economy GDP and for more than 70% of ocean economy employment. The maritime transportation sector account for 16% of ocean economy employment and 29% of ocean economy GDP in the region; ship and boat building accounts for 11% of employment and 13% of GDP; and commercial fisheries and seafood processing account for 6% of employment and 8% of GDP. Information about the spatial distribution and status of coastal and marine resources and the economic activities that make use of them serve as an input to planning processes that will guide the future use of the region's marine resources and the benefits they provide to future generations of residents and visitors in the Northeast Region.

### **VII. Climate Adaptation Planning: An example from Gulf of Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (S. Hutto, NOAA Gulf of Farallones NMS)**

Sara Hutto, the Ocean Climate Program Coordinator at Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, presented the climate work completed by GFNMS since 2008 to reduce Sanctuary emissions, characterize climate impacts and vulnerabilities in the region, inventory climate-related monitoring, and develop management actions to directly address climate impacts. Sara highlighted the critical role that the GFNMS Advisory Council has played in accomplishing each component of the climate program, and discussed next steps for the climate program.

### **VIII. Discussion on Formation of Subcommittees or Working Groups on Climate Change and Protecting SBNMS**

As a follow-on to Sara Hutto's presentation on the climate model that GFNMS has undertaken, Heather Knowles, newly-appointed SAC Chair, encouraged discussion amongst SAC members on the value of forming subcommittees or working groups to discuss potential conservation strategies relative to SBNMS. At the last SAC meeting this topic was raised and it was agreed that a more in-depth discussion would be addressed at a future SAC meeting. Heather reminded longer-seated SAC members and those newer members who haven't been involved in a working group or a subcommittee that it's not only within the remit of the SAC to form working groups and subcommittees, but it is part of its role as outlined in the Charter -- specifically that the SAC should be developing work plans and collaborating with the sanctuary staff to help focus, prioritize, and to conduct work. The Charter also gives the SAC the ability to create subcommittees or working groups.

Having set the context and background for the direction of the discussion, the desired outcome is to gain alignment on whether the SAC should form a subcommittee or some other type of group to tackle these topics and if so, what the composition may look like. It is hoped that with the discussion the SAC can action something and, that work can commence and, by the next SAC meeting, some progress will have been made.

Rich Delaney: SAC members may recall at the previous SAC meeting that Rich had just returned from the SAC Summit in Annapolis. He came back thoroughly impressed with the Gulf of Farallones NMS (GFNMS) climate initiative. He added that he was pleased that Sara Hutto of GFNMS could join this SAC meeting to present the findings of this initiative. Many of the other SAC chairs commiserated that some of their management plans had not been revisited or updated and as a SAC had not gone back and utilized the action plans generated from the management

plans. There was also another discussion expressing concern that as a collective group the SACs and the sanctuary program, generally do not have enough conservation initiatives or authority within its domain to protect the special resources that it's charged with managing. All of these thoughts came together and Rich shared this with the SAC. Maybe the SAC should take the lead like GFNMS has done, at least possibly through a subcommittee to begin a set of discussions to help determine where SAC priorities might be such as climate change, conservation strategies, or emerging new issues that the Management Plan doesn't address. The Plan is already over 10 years old and new issues always emerge. In the interim since the last meeting, the SAC Executive Committee tried to shape what could be offered to the SAC as a suggestion for going forward. John Williamson was good enough to consolidate this into a short proposal which in effect suggests that maybe there could be a subcommittee of the SAC that would start to take a look at the 2-3 issues mentioned and possibly more. It is hoped that as a group the SAC would like to do something and that there is interest.

John Williamson: He provided a handout of the Proposal. It was a fruitful discussion amongst the Executive Committee and the sanctuary superintendent in pulling together the proposal. He gave details of what the subcommittee might look like and what its task may be.

The Management Plan review for the sanctuary started 2001 from scratch and was a lengthy process. It took several years with working groups created by the SAC, in a number of different areas and finally coalescing into a plan that was submitted for approval in 2006, and was finally approved in 2010. This process involved all of the SAC members in one way or another during that period. A few members of the SAC from that period are still seated. But there are a lot of new members at the table now. So it seems there is a real need to begin taking a new look at the Management Plan with some fresh eyes on it. Secondly, the sanctuary program has been seeking to act on more than 200 recommendations that evolved from the SAC over the period of years since the Plan was submitted. There have been lessons learned. There has been progress made. There have been some setbacks. It would be nice to have something of an overview of what was learned from implementation of the Plan and where deficiencies still remain. Finally, one of the big lessons learned, relating to Sara Hutto's GFNMS climate presentation is that much of what the SAC does to make things happen for the benefit of the sanctuary actually depends on partnerships outside the sanctuary, and partnerships that are represented by the SAC. Also there is as part of an overall assessment a need to know what is the potential from SAC partnerships and how best to engage and develop those partnerships. This is the basis for the Proposal that is put forward -- to convene some sort of a committee to get started. The SAC will have the opportunity to reshape the subcommittee as the work progresses. The purpose of the subcommittee would be to assess the current state of the sanctuary's management and begin to fill its vision for the future. John Williamson highlighted points in the proposal ending that there is a wide range of strategies that can be entertained. (For more detail, Proposal is attached.)

Ben Haskell: Shared with the SAC a couple of things that are underway that will inform this conversation: One is that Ben, Deputy Superintendent, and Alice Stratton, sanctuary staff marine ecologist, are producing a working draft of a climate impacts report on current impacts on sanctuary resources and what the future impacts might be. It is hoped to have a working draft completed in time for the October SAC meeting. In addition, a colleague at NOS, Dr. Mark Monaco, is working with Dr. Mark Fogerty from the NOAA NEFSC on an integrated ecosystem assessment. This is actually the third and last year. As a subset of this ecosystem assessment, Mark Monaco has offered to work with sanctuary staff on updating the Condition Report which is usually a precursor to a revised Management Plan that gives the public an idea of the health of the sanctuary. Ideally, it is based on empirical data as well as on expert opinion. The last Condition Report came out in 2006. Sanctuary staff will brainstorm with Mark Monaco and talk about sanctuary needs and ultimately produce an updated Condition Report, but the time frame is

unknown at this time. It will be more quantitative than the 2006 Condition Report which was largely qualitative based on expert opinion.

John Williamson. The Condition Report would be a strong tie-in to what the subcommittee would be looking at.

Discussion on the Proposal brought forward by John Williamson as it relates to the 47th SAC agenda topics on the Formation of Subcommittees on Climate Change and SBNMS Protection:

Susan Farady: Really appreciates the thinking that has gone into this but is troubled by this proposal for a number of reasons: Speaking in defense of the Management Plan review process, the law says that the sanctuaries should do this. Doesn't understand what happened to that requirement. Not aware that it's gone away -- are sanctuaries as a whole thinking through that piece of the law or what the sense is of councils? Understands plans and reviews maybe not be working as well as they should. But there is a real purpose to this. At the last SAC meeting, Rich Delaney commented that no one knows the sanctuary is out there, or that the SAC cannot get a mobile gear commercial fishing member at the table, and that the sanctuary isn't getting anywhere. She is really uncomfortable with doing a Management Plan review in piecemeal that is being driven by the SAC. It limits public visibility and engagement, and is being very selective about certain issues. What does conservation strategies mean? That can mean a lot of things for a lot of people. That is a risk thinking of the categories and the process, as painful as it was in getting through the Management Plan review. But the boxes were clearly identified and they were all covered, maybe too much, but it was all within the mandate. The sanctuaries have a mandate as managers, the SAC has a mandate as an advisory council. They are not the managers. This is a bit beyond the SAC purview in advising the managers. They have their budget and their staff, and their interagency stuff to deal with. So she is a little uncomfortable proceeding piecemeal outside of a more comprehensive and fair process -- maybe missing some other pieces that have been considered and doesn't want to downplay the importance of SAC engagement in the process. But between the lines, it sounds like a Management Plan review process being conducted by a little subcommittee of the SAC and doesn't think this is appropriate.

John Williamson: The intent is not to duplicate the Management Plan review. He doesn't believe the sanctuary has it in the future budget. The intent is to maybe at some point begin to advise the sanctuary on how it can pursue the agenda of the Management Plan more successfully in some areas.

Rich Delaney: Views this as a precursor to the Management Plan review since there doesn't seem to be any update in the future. There is not a budget and there has been no word if it's going to happen. The SAC could sit back and wait several years for that to happen or at least try a little bit on its own. At a minimum, it might have some SAC members motivated to open the Management Plan. It is the SAC's responsibility to know what is in the Management Plan, to advise the sanctuary superintendent about what it thinks is important. Rich doesn't think the SAC has done a good job of this. As Chair over that past few years, he wished looking back that he had pushed to be more proactive at this. Let the SAC look at it and see if as a group it can identify where it wants to advise what could become priorities. There are some new issues including climate change that the SAC wasn't thinking a lot about just 10 years ago. This is just the SAC doing what it's supposed to do, know what its role is -- look at the plan, that the SAC assess itself and the progress that has been made so far.

Susan Farady: Just needs to be very careful as an advisory body and as folks who have been selected to represent constituencies in exactly what this thing is called and what its mission is because that makes sense. The way the proposal is written is troubling if she were a member of

certain constituencies. She thinks it could be troubling to a number of certain constituencies because it doesn't sound transparent and it doesn't sound public and it sounds like a small group of folks getting together and figuring out what the sanctuary should do. She doesn't think that is what is meant. She believes the context and the naming of this -- the SAC should think carefully about this and whether it's committed in writing or not. She agrees with Mark Monaco's initiative -- thinks that that sort of Condition Report accountability piece on how the sanctuary is doing both in terms of science and new issues and being on top of this thing that was stamped for approval in 2010. Whatever this may be should be carefully thought out so it fits well into the context of the other things. Thinks the intent heard from Rich Delaney earlier and the context is different than a conservation strategies committee or an SBNMS protection subcommittee as listed on the agenda -- doesn't think that's right. If what the SAC is doing is a response to the Management Plan or a SAC review that would be fine. But that sounds like that is what the Executive Committee wants to do, right? Get everyone on board with the Management Plan and do a temperature check? How is the SAC doing as an advisory body? The SAC are not the managers. They are not the decision makers.

Rich Delaney: Was trying to describe what was listed as initial tasks in the Proposal.

Deborah Cramer: Little confused because the title on the Proposal document is different from that of the SAC Agenda.

John Williamson: The agenda was approved a week prior to the Proposal being finalized. Ideas were evolving and continue to evolve.

Craig MacDonald: Regarding the Management Plan review. Understands that the Management Plan review is being back-burnered in most of the sanctuaries that are overdue for review, including SBNMS. The budget is flat and the sanctuary program is now expected to go through a series of expansions initiated by Congress in some sites and through the nomination process of new sites that are coming in from across the country. There are no funds available in the near future, certainly not in FY17, and there is no further word on any specific directives. What has been shared is that SBNMS will need to be prepared to assist other sites by providing staff support. SBNMS has not yet been tapped since it already has several staff who are assisting other sites. So sanctuary staff is tapped in other ways to help the program across the board. But the Management Plan update has stalled at some of the existing sites where otherwise it would have been scheduled to happen by now. He perceives a frustration on the part of folks who have been involved in the Management Plan process over time. SBNMS has made strides such as moving the shipping lanes in the sanctuary. But a lot of issues in the plan have not gotten the attention needed. The reason for that is to do the actions and to work toward fulfilling the strategies, a budget is needed to contract and direct the work. Sanctuary staff is finding itself in a situation where it is chasing the money through grant writing for proposals to partner with individuals who can help it get the work done. SBNMS is no longer in the driver seat to direct the actions that are asked of it and expected within the Management Plan. So it can be seen as wandering back and forth in different parts of the plan where staff is able to generate through partnerships the support to enable the sanctuary to move forward. It is more of a random walk through the document since it can no longer call the shots. There is recognition by the SAC Executive Committee that this needs to be communicated and to solicit SAC involvement to become more familiar with the plan and thinking of ways to help move the plan forward. There have been some initiatives in the plan that did not go very far and others that unexpectedly went a long way. That is the random walk that is being seen. From the sanctuary superintendent's perspective, dealing with the staff limitations, dealing with the lack of a budget, dealing with the larger initiatives of the sanctuary program and the growth that it is going through, this is where the sanctuary staff finds itself.

Bill Adler. Is the idea to move the SAC from stagnant to a point where there would be several people on a subcommittee to look at some ideas and then need to be discussed at a full SAC meeting?

John Williamson: Yes, but the first step is to make sure everyone is familiar with the work done so far with the Management Plan, then take a critical look at what lessons were learned from that, and make that conversation happen at this SAC. One of the examples used during the Management Plan discussion with the SAC Executive Committee is that there are very interesting and "out-of-the-box" opportunities seen played out in the last several years since the Management Plan was submitted. One of those being the lobster industry's response to the large whale plan in the Mass Bay area. How they've gone about it, what they are doing for large whales. The fact of the matter is that maybe there is an opportunity here to give the lobster industry a round of applause, call attention to the public. Make this a story of a success by NOAA and the industry working together. There are things like that that could be enhancing the work of bringing the Management Plan and its points to fruition over the course of time. Are there things that the SAC could be doing in partnership with other entities such as the lobstermen?

Bill Adler: Sitting next to NMFS and we don't like them. Because our boys were shut down because even if they did everything they could, they are fighting an uphill battle and meanwhile they are going out of business and didn't get credit for everything they did and have been doing.

Laura Howes. Is the homework to re-read or read the Management Plan plan and come back to the October meeting? And once SAC members have all read it and they all have ideas, then they'll start to see what committees to form. That seems to be the simplest thing -- how to start and then go to further tasks.

Heather Knowles: Liked the suggestion. It boils down to, there is a Management Plan and the sanctuary/SAC is not going to have a new one soon. The SAC has an opportunity to examine the Management Plan, and see how it is doing with it, whether it's informal, whether it ties in with a formal update of the Condition Report. There is a Management Plan that the SAC can look at and see where progress has been made and where progress is not being made. It might give the SAC an opportunity to advise the sanctuary on how to change their tack. The SAC has spent a lot of time on certain things that ultimately were not successful and perhaps would have been better served moving in a different direction. It cannot answer the questions until it asks the questions in the context of the current Management Plan and see where it leads. It's 2 inches thick and the SAC needs to focus it. The takeaway so far is that there isn't an alignment for moving right now to a subcommittee-type setting but maybe the group supports a thinking-through and maybe a study of the Management Plan to see where maybe there are some opportunities for the SAC to bring some focus and to collaborate with the sanctuary.

Bill Adler: Idea is that the SAC could be looking at the Plan. It might be helpful if the SAC were to be given a list of the things to look at in the Plan and everyone can concentrate on this. Otherwise SAC members have the plan and don't know where to begin. If there is a way to relook at the Plan, maybe somebody needs to at least break out the issues, have a discussion, and everyone can concentrate on that. It may take more than one meeting but the idea is to have an outline handed to the SAC and then take a look at the issues.

Rich Delaney: That is one of the roles of the subcommittee. Either all 20-30 of the SAC members promise to read it and come back and have a group discussion or ask 6-8 people to raise their hands and make a stronger commitment to do just as Bill Adler suggested -- come back with some recommendations and guidance that the SAC can look into in more detail.

John Williamson: It's absolutely essential that the SAC head down this road whether or not it forms a subcommittee today. The next time the SAC convenes, everyone will have familiarized themselves with at least the Action Plans section of the Management Plan. There were 12 working groups that developed the action plans with recommendations to the SAC in a range of priorities from highest to lowest. The set of recommendations and the work of the 12 working groups is what the SAC should familiarize themselves with. Then if the SAC wants to have a subcommittee meet in the meantime and be ready at the next SAC meeting to then suggest ways to address the performance up to this point, that's fine, or rather have the subcommittee convene and give it a task at the October meeting if the SAC wants to wait until then. Whichever is most efficient.

Tracey Dalton: Likes the idea of being proactive and there is a lot of capacity around the table that should be utilized to its full advantage. Many of the present SAC members were not on all of the working groups for the last Plan or even on the SAC. She supports the overall effort whatever approach it takes. She suggested that maybe at the next meeting some of the presentations given could be focused on this. Maybe the sanctuary staff can give an update of some of the actions that are being worked on and address them. That would be a good use of SAC meeting time.

Michael Pierdinock. There has been a lot of discussion today about climate change. How will it be an impact in the Management Plan? It was said earlier that Mark Monaco, Mike Fogarty, and Alice Stratton etc., giving a climate impact report and then an update in the Condition Report is basically comparing it to the original plan. It seems that what would be done as part of this SAC subcommittee that climate change would be part of the discussion. Would be most concerned about the impact climate change is having on the habitat of the sanctuary, and if so what is that impact? Go back and look at existing conditions of what was in the Management Plan, see what has changed since then based on climate change impacts. Not sure that's the basis of what is being done. Then from there assess or evaluate whether there needs to be any actions taken associated with that habitat. One thing comes to mind, and added that he is no expert in the Management Plan, but is intimately familiar with it as a result of the SERA and DHRA, and he is sorry he had to be because of those battles that had to be fought. One thing that jumps out is if he recalls properly, it's the only place on earth where commercial dragging has been shut down for 15-plus years and the rebounded habitat is such that it is not consistent with what has been observed elsewhere up and down the coast throughout. So that rebound has not been the same. What is causing that habitat not to rebound naturally like is observed in all other sanctuaries or elsewhere? Is that climate change? Is that Deer Island sewage treatment plant and the discharge from there? Is now the discharge/flow from that treatment plant having an impact as a result of increased temperature, increased acidification, etc.? Previously he talked about pharmaceuticals discharge that are not regulated and are being discharged from the Deer Island sewage treatment plant. At some point the EPA and Government will regulate that discharge and it will need to be addressed. Already there are problems on Cape Cod where that has happened and impacting people's ground water supplies. So that's coming down the road. So are the pharmaceuticals, increased temperature, alkalinity, salinity, etc., all of that in combination with that discharge and climate change having an impact on the habitat? Really thinks that needs to be looked at. Go back and look at the baseline, know it's not easy to do -- it's a lot of time and money, but maybe this can be expanded upon. It was stated that it is an updated Condition Report or revised Management Plan, so is that what will be done and ultimately reported later this year?

Craig MacDonald: The Condition Report has been standardized across the sanctuaries. Dr. Mark Monaco of NOAA NEFMC is initiating it on the sanctuary's behalf. It is not a comparison with everything.

Ben Haskell: Mark Monaco will be using the new metrics that were created system-wide in his effort. Not clear on how many of these metrics he will be able to address within the framework of

the integrated ecosystem assessment. Will learn more about this in the next few months. Quite sure the effects of climate change will be incorporated into whatever parameters are being looked at. In addition, Alice Stratton and Ben are proceeding with a different climate impacts report. It's not the same thing. It's looking at available literature, thanks to the NOAA NEFSC, where the literature can be mined. Looking at known impacts such as ocean acidification, effects on shellfish, etc., to come out in the fall.

Craig MacDonald: For clarification, the Condition Report is a formal precursor to the Management Plan. It is the Office of National Marine Sanctuary Program standardizing the metrics across all of the sites. The intention of the Condition Report is to provide a report card on the status of sanctuary resources. So it is not just climate change, if there is over fishing that gets included, if there are whale strikes and entanglements, the whole suite of actions that are captured in the Action Plans in one way or another gets incorporated across the Condition Report in a more synthesized fashion. In the case of the SBNMS Management Plan, the Condition Report itself gets incorporated into the document. The Condition Report that was published in 2007 is updated somewhat so that it reflects the 2010 circumstances so there are some stovepipes in terms of how the work gets done. Staff is also looking at water quality. Mass Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is relied on heavily in the sanctuary and, in the preparation of the plan, it has pulled back a number of the sites where they used to sample, so the coverage is not as good. But MWRA is permitted by SBNMS and does provide annual reports. So the condition of the sanctuary is still being tracked, not on pharmaceuticals, but more on classical pollutants. Sanctuary staff also initiated a collaboration with Univ. of RI on a whole new set pollutants that relate to pharmaceuticals and other substances. If the program can be funded, a lot of the concerns raised will be looked at for the first time. For the purposes of this discussion, the Condition Report is a formula methodology that cannot be changed. Mark Monaco will be informing that matrix. The question is, does the SAC want a subcommittee on climate change as a follow-up to Sara Hutto's GFNMS climate presentation and knowing the work that Ben and Alice are doing, or wait until the work is completed? Two issues can be bundled here with the larger initiative on conservation strategies, and subcommittee discussion. Susan Farady mentioned it cannot be a puppet process as an alternative to the Management Plan; it would have to be more of a review of an update of the status of what the current situation is. Laura Howes' suggestion to get familiar with this and a lot of information in the action plans and context that underlies the rationale for Management Plan is included in the Resource State section of the plan -- it's really the Resource State and the Action Plans where one can get the information about what the problems are.

Deborah Cramer: Thinks people should have copies of the Management Plan before the next meeting. It is recognized that the SAC has turned over so much that a lot of history has disappeared. There needs to be some time to create common ground again. She attended a SAC summit on behalf of the SAC Chair some years ago where Dan Basta (former ONMS Director) was present. The entire time, Dan talked about how the SACs had to change all of their priorities to deal with climate change. This was the most important thing that he felt the sanctuaries should be dealing with. She came back and reported this at the next SAC meeting. But the SAC was not really ready to ditch everything with good reason and jump on that. Immediately following this, she wrote a letter on behalf of the sanctuary superintendent asking to make sure there was a ton of research that would go on to track ocean acidification because this was going to be a real serious problem. She has no idea how many stations are in the sanctuary, over how many years, whether it is being tracked at all. But all this stuff is coming out, when that paper starts being pulled together, it's going to be such a high stack that one can cull from and this is going to be really bad. She can't see why the SAC is putting this off another 5 months until the next SAC meeting while they all get caught up. Then looking at this plan will be another 8-12 months after that, that the SAC starts looking at climate change. If that is what it wants to do as a SAC, it won't even be participating in this. Was global warming in the Management Plan or not? Amazing changes in the

Gulf of Maine have been documented, and the study that came out in *Science*, it's not just changes in the Ph levels to the changes in aragonite saturation level, etc. It's how all of this is impacted and it's going to make it a lot worse. The SAC can just sit here and watch this or not. She doesn't understand the legalities of this, though the SAC is setting up two subcommittees one for climate change and one to express the other level of frustration, what can the sanctuary SAC do to carry out its mandate?

Jen Anderson: Needs to have guidance and push and narrowing the scope down. Is there some way the SAC can hone in on a process or the sanctuary staff can come back with prods or pokes or zeroing in on things? It's going to be really hard to stay focused between now and the October meeting.

Ben Haskell: At a previous SAC meeting in Plymouth, sanctuary staff walked the SAC through each action plan and the strategy of each plan and assessed its status. Tables were represented with an overview for each action plan. Suggests that maybe sanctuary staff should do this again, working with a couple of SAC members or at least the Executive Committee. Then get this out well before October so that everyone is prepared and has the same information for the October meeting.

Susan Farady: Agrees. The Plan is old and it's dated; even though it was adopted and approved by the SAC in 2006. It's important because at some point in the future, the SAC and sanctuary superintendent are going to be held accountable. So much has changed. She is not sure it's worth spending a ton of time. But it's good to understand what is the report card? Also where are the gaps? There is a gap analysis. Should there be a group that looks at the different pieces of the Management Plan or devote all the energy toward climate change as a subgroup?

Ben Haskell: Can pull together action plans and provide this information at the next meeting along with the report that he and Alice Stratton are working on.

Heather Knowles: Ben Haskell's suggestion is good.

General discussion amongst SAC members continued about what sort of data and information should be provided to the SAC by the October meeting. This culminated in Heather Knowles proposing the following motion:

***Motion: Action the sanctuary staff to perform an assessment and present a summary status on the action plans which will be provided to the SAC in advance of the October meeting with the intent of furthering a SAC review and discussion. The Executive Committee will review and provide direction as appropriate upon receipt. Passed unanimously.***

Craig MacDonald: After conferring with the Executive Committee, he presented another aspect that ties in with the passed motion. There is a statement in the SAC Charter under Council Roles, page 3, item #6: *"The council shall develop an annual work plan, in consultation with and approved by the sanctuary superintendent, to establish an agenda for specific issues and projects the council intends to address."*

This is a provision within the Charter that the SAC has not been really working with. When the Management Plan was being developed in the early years, that was the action plans and that is what the SAC was doing. Now that there isn't that formal product to produce, there is still that expectation. Nathalie Ward as the SAC Coordinator then provides this information to the National

SAC Coordinator. So there is an expectation the SAC as a body will develop an action plan. This work being done will lend some foundation for how the SAC wants to address that need.

Nathalie Ward: The development of an annual SAC Action Plan is a pivotal aspect for the SAC to engage in annually in order to evaluate and monitor what its accomplishments are and how to reassess those actions/needs at the end of the year. The sanctuary's fiscal year starts 1 October so it would be especially productive for the SAC to think about before the next meeting.

## **IX. Constituent Report “Early Results of the Gulf of Main Industry Based Survey (D. Pierce, Mass DMF)”**

Dr. Pierce reported on DMF’s Gulf of Maine cod Industry-Based Survey (IBS). He noted the IBS will: (1) provide another science source (resource data and information) for use in assessments; (2) test fishermen’s hypothesis about GOM cod redistributing offshore in response to warming water; (3) demonstrate relevance and importance of a GOM cod IBS for improving our understanding of the distribution of cod at times and in areas when the NEFSC surveys are not performed; (4) acquire additional scientific data on other groundfish stocks in the survey area; (5) enable minimum estimates of swept-area biomass; and (6) determine the cod IBS’s potential for providing indices of abundance.

Two cruises were successfully completed (April & May). The net was measured (door spread, headrope height, speed). The top two flounders were dabs and yellowtail (“Lots of flats”). According to IBS personnel, “Not catching a lot of cod.” Data will be analyzed asap. Lobster gear was found in places never witnessed before and was an obstacle to pre-selected tows. The Sanctuary permitted IBS research, i.e., survey tows in Sanctuary. David expressed his appreciation to Sanctuary staff.

Two additional spring cruise are planned: June and July. The IBS will begin again in October.

## **X. Agency/Government Reports**

### **i. MA Coastal Zone Management (T. Callaghan)**

1) There is a new wave buoy in Cape Cod Bay ([http://www.neracoos.org/realtime\\_map](http://www.neracoos.org/realtime_map)) located north of Barnstable Harbor. NERACOOS has asked that folks make their networks aware of this buoy and remind boaters not to tie up to the buoy. Continuous, real-time, wave data at this location was requested by pilots to improve their safety as they move north through the Cape Cod Canal.

2) CZM has hired a summer intern, Fiona Maguire, to help us develop information related to aquaculture management in the Massachusetts ocean management plan. Fiona will be reaching out to various folks to gather information on siting, potential resource conflicts, and performance standards for minimizing and mitigating conflicts. If you have any information, or a contact, please email [Fiona.Maguire@state.ma.us](mailto:Fiona.Maguire@state.ma.us).

### **ii. MA Environmental Police/NOAA Law Enforcement (P. Desroches/T. Donovan)**

Lt Phil Desroches quoted from an email he received from Capt Dean Belanger, Mass Environmental Police, concerning the amount of time MEP dedicates in the sanctuary:

"Phil, I have looked at the SBNMS numbers and conservatively estimate approximately 78 vessel and 150 personnel hours of Fisheries patrol since Nov. 1. It is difficult to put a true accurate

number to the amount of time or contacts within the Sanctuary due to the way our reporting works. The only recording we have is dedicated patrol."

Also discussed briefly was the sanctuary staff and NMFS OLE getting together with Capt Dean Belanger (NOAA OLE JEA program administrator) to determine the types of data the sanctuary is looking for. This would allow OLE to improve its reporting of enforcement activities that occur inside the sanctuary.

LT Desroches believes NOAA OLE's Assistant Director, Tim Donovan, and Ben Haskell of SBNMS, were going to begin this process.

Tim Donovan added timing is good here because OLE is in the process of changing its case reporting system -- how it tracks its metrics. OLE just had a national meeting with all its Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) partners and this issue isn't just with the sanctuary, it's with other states as well as to how the data is collected and reported. Tim will take this information from Phil Desroches and work with his staff to try to see how better to tag sanctuary effort. OLE and MEP will also work with Ben Haskell, Deputy Superintendent, of the sanctuary on this effort.

Tim Donovan reported for Tim Wilmarth, NOAA OLE:

- OLE has hired and trained 8 new Enforcement Officers (nationally)
- OLE assisted with a sanctuary education/outreach event at the Gates school
- I've been conducting patrols enforcing the Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Plan under MMPA. I identified a 2 pinger violations with MEP on Tuesday in SBNMS (under review).
- I'm investigating a juvenile right whale ship strike death discovered in Chatham. The whale was spotted in SBNMS with its mother a week prior.
- Commercial bluefin tuna season starts June 1. I anticipate some focused patrols working with MEP and USCG over the Summer and early Fall.

### iii. New England Fishery Management Council (M. Bachman)

The New England Fishery Management Council last met on April 21-23, 2016. Ongoing fishery management activities of interest to the SAC relate to the groundfish, herring, scallops, ecosystem-based fisheries management, and habitat. In terms of groundfish, the Council continues to review and discuss changes to monitoring approaches for the fishery. The Council is also working to update the process for setting recreational groundfish fishery measures. Under herring, the Council is in the early stages of development of Amendment 8 to the fishery management plan, which will explore the issue of localized depletion of the herring resource. The Council recently hosted a workshop to share ideas about developing catch strategies that will more explicitly account for the role of herring in the ecosystem. At their April meeting, the Council also discussed an increase in fishing effort in the Northern Gulf of Maine management area, which runs along the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, and part of Massachusetts, and partially overlaps the sanctuary. The Council recommended prohibiting possession of large amounts of in-shell scallops inside the VMS demarcation line, which should reduce somewhat the incentive for larger vessels to fish in the NGOM area, and will continue to review management of the resource in the Gulf of Maine. Work on a pilot fishery ecosystem plan (Georges Bank example) and deep sea coral protection measures are ongoing. The final version of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 should be resubmitted to NMFS GARFO during June 2016, and a proposed rule is expected this summer. This amendment includes designation of a dedicated habitat research area overlapping SBNMS.

iv. NOAA Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office (J. Anderson)

### **Whale Sense**

- NOAA Fisheries Service and Whale and Dolphin Conservation received an Environmental Merit Award from the EPA on May 10th for their work developing and implementing the Whale SENSE program.

### **Climate Science Action Plan**

- NOAA Fisheries is seeking comments on a draft climate science plan.
- The draft action plan was developed to meet the growing demand for information to better prepare for and respond to climate-related impacts. Ultimately, this information will be used to develop science-based strategies to sustain our marine resources and human communities that depend on them during this time of changing climate.
- Written comments can be submitted via email to [nmfs.gar.nerap@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.nerap@noaa.gov) by July 29, 2016.

## **XI. New Business**

Anne Smrcina, Education Outreach Coordinator, reported on the final standings in the *USA Today* Readers' Choice voting for the Best Place to See Aquatic Life. Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary finished in first place, due in large part to the support of the SAC, regional and local chambers of commerce, the whale watch community and education partners, like the New England Aquarium. Second place in the voting was Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The results are to be reported on the USA Today website and in an upcoming issue of the paper.

The sanctuary is participating in the ONMS national campaign called "Get Into Your Sanctuary," with a focus weekend of June 26-27 and a national photo contest until July 15. The campaign can work well throughout the summer as a way to encourage the public to explore the sanctuary and our land-side exhibits. For the key weekend, the sanctuary will be bringing our inflatable humpback whale (Salt) to the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park visitor center on The Greenway in Boston from 10am-4pm. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about the sanctuary's research, education, conservation and volunteer programs and our local whales. The Boston Harbor Islands park, Boston Harbor Cruises and New England Aquarium are assisting with this effort. The photo contest, which is open to all members of the public, encourages people to take photos of people, places and uses of the sanctuaries.

Our whale visit to BHI also ties in to the national Every Kid in a Park campaign, which encourages kids (particularly 4th graders) to explore their national parks and other protected federal lands and waters. The sanctuary has just received a Diversity and Inclusion education grant from ONMS to bring a Boston 4th grade out on a whale watch and to participate in a multi-pate sanctuary education program. An informal education component under this grant will be developed with the Hispanic Access Foundation and members of local Dominican communities in eastern Massachusetts.

**XII. Public Comment.** None.

**XIII. Adjourn. 3:10 pm**

May 30, 2016

Re: Proposal for a SAC Conservation Strategies Committee

It has been ten years since adoption of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan based on recommendations of the Sanctuary Advisory Council. During that period of time progress has been made in many priority areas of Sanctuary management, but there have also been set-backs and obstacles. As well, there has been turnover in SAC membership.

Proposal:

- To convene a committee of SAC members to engage in "fact-finding" which will report regularly to, and take direction from, the SAC.

Purpose:

- To assess the current state of the Sanctuary's management and contribute to a vision for the future.

Initial tasks (8 months)

- Assess progress on the SAC's recommended management priorities within the Management Plan (i.e. perform "health check" on progress implementing and executing the MP).
- Obtain feedback from SAC membership

Mid-term task (8-12 months)

- Identify emerging management issues and stressors to the Sanctuary ecology, such as climate change.
- Identify partnerships which contribute to success.
- Identify strategies to strengthen community partnerships to achieve the Sanctuary's conservation goals.

Long-term task (12-18 months):

- Develop an action agenda for SAC membership to pursue.