

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.