

Zoning WG report to the SAC
Jan. 27, 2010

John Williamson presented the ZWG update and provided the following summary for the 29th SAC Minutes:

At its September meeting the ZWG made a systematic analysis of nine zones, existing in regulation, which manage various aspects of fisheries in the SBNMS. At its January 13th meeting the ZWG then attempted to apply those analyses to determine whether the combination of measures is adequate protection for ecological integrity of the Sanctuary, and if not where are the shortcomings.

This was a difficult meeting. By the middle of the afternoon it appeared there would be no consensus on adequacy of current measures and there was great resistance to moving forward with a cumulative analysis. The determination of adequacy rests with the question "In comparison to what?" However, in an impressive display of group dynamic, the ZWG rallied to produce a tentative consensus recommendation for this SAC, to the effect:

"Existing zones and regulations were designed to address specific issues and to the extent that they are successful they contribute to the protection of ecological integrity; however, no single existing zone or regulation currently protects the ecological integrity (as defined below) of the SBNMS. Neither does the cumulative effect of these zones and regulations ensure the protection of ecological integrity. We recognize that ecological integrity is compromised by multiple stressors, and the protection of EI depends on factors inside and outside the SBNMS."

This is a working draft statement that may change somewhat as we move forward (indeed there has been some continued refinement by email since the meeting). As the next step, we anticipate a more robust discussion of cumulative effects to identify gaps and to make recommendations on how to address the gaps.

One sub-group of the ZWG will do a more thorough compilation of existing statutes that apply to the SBNMS identifying both regulatory purposes and the predicted direct and indirect effects from the associated EIS on different aspects of the physical and biological environment.

A second sub-group, the scientific expertise on the ZWG, will do:

- an analysis of the likely benefits of these direct and indirect effects
- identify, as a strawman, what protections are needed to fully protect environmental integrity (what would EI look like for SBNMS) and
- then, after comparison, the gaps with the existing set of statutes.

This is a very challenging exercise, but it is also clear that there is no room for short cuts if we are going to bring the SAC a consensus recommendation. I think we can do it, and we will have that substantially completed for the June SAC meeting.