

## Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

May 21, 2010

### **Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council comments on Port Access Route Study, Encourages Sound Marine Spatial Planning**

On May 21, 2010 the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council approved the submittal of a comment letter to the U.S. Coast Guard regarding a recently commenced Port Access Route Study to evaluate safe navigation routes for vessels transiting into and out of the busy shipping ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, California. The Advisory Council's letter points out the close proximity of the Sanctuary to the area to be studied, and encourages the Coast Guard to incorporate a variety of marine spatial planning considerations and recommendations into the new study. These include the importance of: consulting with sanctuary staff, NMFS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and marine mammal experts; assessing shipping route as well as ship speed impacts to migrating whales; addressing ship traffic conflicts with existing ocean uses, including potential conflicts between oil tankers and other shipping traffic; considering the presence of oil platforms and risk of collisions; assessing possible effects on vessel traffic behavior from future air quality regulations; examining the ability to respond to spills from vessel collisions in the study area; considering national security and Department of Defense activities in the region; and examining shipping effects on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. The Port Access Route Study commenced following navigation safety concerns that arose following significant shifts in shipping traffic patterns that developed starting last year. At this point, in an effort to minimize transit time within a California-regulated area requiring cleaner ship fuels (inside 24 nautical miles of the coast), more than half of the ships that used to transit to and from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach by way of the established shipping lanes within the Santa Barbara Channel (partially overlapping the Sanctuary) are now routing further offshore, south of the northern Channel Islands, in areas that do not have established shipping lanes and that require passage through the Navy's Point Mugu sea range offshore training area. Sanctuary staff are closely conferring with the US Coast Guard to offer assistance with the study, which could be completed later this year. The study itself will not represent a proposed regulatory change by the Coast Guard, but could serve as a basis for possible changes to be pursued. The Advisory Council's comment letter can be viewed from [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) by entering docket number USCG-2009-0765; public and agency comments are being accepted through June 7, 2010. For more information: [michael.murray@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.murray@noaa.gov).

### **Investments in Acoustic Science Urged by Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

On May 21, 2010 the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council approved a letter to Dan Basta, Director of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, highlighting the importance of developing program capacity in acoustic research and monitoring at the

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sanctuary. The Advisory Council specifically pointed out the need for and value of securing funding for: 1) capital improvements to enhance ship monitoring through new Automated Information System receivers, transmitters and towers, as well as High Frequency Acoustic Recording Packages and associated computer loggers; and 2) adequate and stable personnel resources, ranging from a full time equivalent position or a post-doctoral or research fellowship. The basis for the Advisory Council's strong request at this time includes recognition of the fact that a key sanctuary partner involved in acoustic monitoring recently had to remove acoustic monitoring equipment within and around the sanctuary. The Advisory Council also noted that the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is as one of two sites within the sanctuary system (along with Stellwagen Bank) that has initiated acoustic research, thus making it a strategically important site at which to maintain and advance science directed to understanding changes in the ocean's acoustic environment and how these changes affect marine life. Acoustic science has been an ongoing area of interest to the Advisory Council, starting in 2004 with the Council's adoption of a comprehensive report on noise impacts developed by their Conservation Working Group ("*Anthropogenic Noise and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary: How Underwater Noise Affects Sanctuary Resources, And What We Can Do About It*", available at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/pdf/7-12-04.pdf>). For more information: [michael.murray@noaa.gov](mailto:michael.murray@noaa.gov) or [steve.katz@noaa.gov](mailto:steve.katz@noaa.gov).

## **Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

April 8, 2010

### **Gulf of Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils approve forming a joint working group to focus on vessel traffic's potential impacts to sanctuary resources**

At their first joint meeting on April 8, 2010, the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuary advisory councils approved forming a joint working group to focus on vessel traffic's potential impacts to sanctuary resources in the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries. Potential management issues that the group will address include acoustic levels, ship strikes on marine mammals, oil spills, and climate change emissions. The working group will provide information that accurately characterizes the issues related to vessel traffic's impacts, and recommend management strategies that could include monitoring, research, and education to modified or new regulations. Additional goals of the working group include fostering cooperation with cross-jurisdictional partners addressing the same issues, building upon progress that has already been made in addressing these issues, and educating sanctuary users regarding the issues. The working group will be a collaborative process and will include members from the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuary advisory councils, the conservation community, the shipping industry, and the scientific community to investigate and analyze these issues, and develop a comprehensive report for the councils. The working group will endeavor to build upon the previous work and research efforts of other sanctuaries (i.e., Stellwagen Bank and Channel Islands), while also adding to the knowledge base for use by other sites, as applicable, across the National Marine Sanctuary Program.

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## **Gulf of Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils pass joint resolution regarding salmon declines**

The Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuary advisory councils passed a joint resolution at the April 8, 2010 meeting recognizing the importance of salmon as a sanctuary resource. At the joint Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallones sanctuary advisory council meeting (February 18, 2010), the concern was raised that salmon populations are in serious decline and are an iconic species on the west coast. In response, Gulf of the Farallones advisory council members, Barbara Emley and Bob Wilson, presented to the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank councils a resolution recognizing that salmon are an important sanctuary resource. Both councils discussed the resolution and accepted an edited version conveying the council's concerns about the current condition of salmon populations and encouraging salmon protection and restoration measures based on sound, peer-reviewed science. The resolution was sent to Sanctuary Superintendents Maria Brown (GFNMS) and Dan Howard (CBNMS) to forward to the appropriate state and federal agencies with jurisdiction to protect and restore salmon runs in the region.

## **Advisory Councils Unanimously Approve Climate Change Impacts Report**

Lance Morgan, CBNMS Council Chair and Climate Change Impacts Working Group member, provided a presentation to the Cordell and Gulf of the Farallones advisory councils on the key issues identified and working group recommendations put forth in "Climate Change Impacts: Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries." The report was authored by a joint working group of the Farallones and Cordell Bank marine sanctuary advisory councils, and is the outcome of a year and a half of intensive collaboration among local experts representing 16 agencies, organizations, and academic institutions. Existing observations and science-based expectations were used to identify an extensive suite of potential climate change impacts to habitats, plants, and animals within the San Francisco Bay Area's unique ocean and coastal zones. The report provides a foundation of information and scientific insight for the sanctuary to develop strategies for addressing climate change. The council approved the report unanimously with no suggested changes and forwarded the document to the sanctuary superintendents. The public release of the final document was held on June 3, 2010 at California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco and it is available online at <http://farallones.noaa.gov/eco/climate/climate.html#report>.

## **Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

See Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council section for highlights of a joint meeting held in April 2010.

## **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

### **MBNMS Advisory Council involvement in Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) Initiative**

In 2010, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary embarked on an Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) Initiative, which uses a collaborative approach to bring together the best available science to explore how we can meet EBM goals, using several ocean management tools. The Initiative relies on several analytical approaches to create the information base,

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including expert workshops, scientific assessments and ecosystem models. To date the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (advisory council) has received several presentations regarding this topic.

#### April 15, 2010

At the April 15, 2010 meeting, the advisory council received an informational presentation from Frank Schwing, Research Oceanographer for the National Marine Fisheries Service, on NOAA's Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). The IEA is an innovative scientific support and modeling tool for informing ecosystem-based management. The IEA will synthesize the best available science and provide useful information for advancing the EBM Initiative.

Beginning in Fall 2010, the MBNMS will begin hosting a series of expert workshops to develop guidelines and criteria to address the EBM goals: a) protect unique and rare places; b) protect and restore ecosystem components; c) establish research areas; and d) promote sustainable uses. These scientific workshops will be for invited experts, appropriate management partners and select Advisory Council members. The workshops will be open to the public with opportunity for public comment.

#### June 17, 2010

At the June 17, 2010 meeting, the advisory council received an update on the EBM initiative, which included a request from staff for the advisory council to establish a subcommittee to assist staff in planning the expert workshops. The advisory council will continue to receive updates related to the Initiative throughout the year.

### **Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council**

#### **OCNMS Advisory Council urges greater investment in data management infrastructure for OCNMS and other marine sanctuaries**

At its May meeting, the OCNMS Advisory Council unanimously approved a letter to ONMS Director Dan Basta highlighting the need for better data management and sharing systems at sanctuaries. OCNMS revised management plan will highlight the need for improved data management, sharing and reporting. However, the AC recognizes that OCNMS, as well as other sanctuaries, do not have the infrastructure necessary to share and distribute the data they collect in a timely and user-friendly manner. Thus, the AC's letter requests that ONMS support OCNMS and other sanctuaries by providing a national-level, centralized data storage and retrieval system. To download a copy of the letter sent to Director Basta, please visit, [http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/AboutUs/sac/sac\\_meetschedule.html](http://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/AboutUs/sac/sac_meetschedule.html) and click on the link under the May AC meeting titled "Final Letter on Data Management".

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