

DRAFT FINAL

Council Chair Name
Council Chair Address

Dear Name:

I am pleased to invite you to the May 12-15, 2008 Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting, hosted by the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary at the Newport News Marriott at City Center.

This is the seventh year the National Marine Sanctuary Program has held this major national meeting. Unfortunately we were forced to cancel the 2007 meeting due to budget constraints, however we will make up for that in May. These meetings allow us to bring together our collective experiences and wisdom on advisory councils, share our lessons-learned, and discuss national topics and issues. It is also a time to thank you, our dedicated and passionate volunteers, who work so diligently with us to protect our sanctuary resources.

The enclosed draft agenda and regional case study guidelines help prepare you for the meeting. I would like the full council to review the agenda and provide input to your sanctuary superintendent and council coordinator, who are aware that the comments are due to Karen Brubeck, National Advisory Council Coordinator by January 31, 2008. However, if you do not have a scheduled sanctuary council meeting before the deadline, you should review the agenda and provide input, and then brief your council on the agenda at the next opportunity.

As you know, we modify these meetings in response to feedback from staff and you. We propose three significant changes to the 2008 meeting:

- **Regional Focus on Day 1.** To encourage cross-pollination of councils within the regions, improve communications, and identify common opportunities, collaborations, and projects, each regional director will form a break-out discussion group with their council chairs and coordinators. This exercise was created to address concerns expressed during the 2006 chairs dinner on the new regional structure, the impacts it may have on the councils and sites, the potential interactions council members would have with their regional directors, etc. (See attachments for more information)
- **National-level discussions & Regional Case Studies.** For a number of years we asked every council chair to present a case study at the annual meeting. Your feedback to us indicated that although you found the case studies valuable, you preferred to have time for discussion of significant policy. In 2008, in response to the meeting evaluations, we propose to incorporate what the NMSP feels is the best balance—facilitated national level discussions (MPR Evolution, Greening, etc) and one case study from each region. (See attachments for more information)

- **Three-day meeting format.** At your request, we are returning to a slightly longer meeting format that will allow for a field trip so you can experience the sanctuary community and have some unstructured networking time.

All discussions will be two-way information exchanges between the NMSP staff and council chairs. We seek your **individual**, expert opinion based on your knowledge of your sanctuary, the NMSP and councils. You are welcome to read a statement from your council, but other than that the discussions are of an individual nature.

Please start sharing this information with your entire council, keeping them informed of the national meeting's agenda, discussions and exercises. This will help ensure that you represent them as well as possible. Remember, communication is a key ingredient. Please contact Karen Brubeck (karen.brubeck@noaa.gov or 206-842-6084) with any questions regarding the meeting. You can expect the final agenda, and meeting and travel logistics in February.

I look forward to seeing you in Newport News!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director,
National Marine Sanctuary Program

Attachments:

- Draft 2008 Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting Agenda
- Case Study Guidelines

Cc: Regional Directors
Sanctuary Superintendents
Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinators