

Sanctuary Advisory Councils



Photo: Nicole Capps

ONMS staff and advisory council chairs work to identify opportunities to further council involvement in sanctuary management.



Photo: Nicole Capps

2010 Sanctuary Advisory Council Summit on the Olympic Peninsula, Washington.



Photo: Nicole Capps

Makah Tribal singers greet Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs.

From left to right, Makah Tribal Council Member Micah McCarty, Makah Tribal Planner Greig Arnold, Makah Tribal Council Chairman Michael Lawrence and Makah Museum Director Janine Bowe chop.

Connecting to Communities

Sanctuary advisory councils (councils) are community-based advisory groups established to provide advice and recommendations to the superintendents of the national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Individuals with a wide range of perspectives and experiences serve their communities and sanctuaries as council members and members of council working groups and subcommittees. Council members include fishers, divers, teachers, boaters, business people, conservationists, protected area managers, scientists, and elected officials.

In 2010, there were approximately 731 people actively engaged in sanctuary advisory councils, including 472 council members (and alternates) and nearly 260 additional individuals serving on council working groups. Collectively, these individuals dedicated more than 13,000 hours annually to serving as liaisons between their community constituents and the sanctuary. Councils strengthen connections between the sanctuary and the public

and help build increased stewardship for sanctuary resources.

Participating in Sanctuary Management

The ONMS is unique in the level of support provided to advisory councils and the extent to which councils are interwoven into the very fabric of sanctuary management. Councils provide advice about sanctuary operations and projects, including education and outreach, research and science, regulations and enforcement, and management planning. They are particularly critical in assisting a sanctuary during its designation and management plan review process. Councils often establish working groups and subcommittees to assist them in addressing priority issues and projects and in employing additional expertise. The most common working groups and subcommittees are those focusing on education, research, and conservation.

Supporting Council Activities

The ONMS has over twenty years of experience in working with sanctuary advisory councils. The first council was established for the Florida Keys NMS in

Engaging In National Marine Sanctuary Act Reauthorization

Between September 2008 and January 2010, thirteen sanctuary advisory councils made over 70 recommendations, urging NOAA and the ONMS to take action on the issue of ocean acidification. This action demonstrated a new level of passion and engagement – a new way that the councils can focus on local sanctuary resources while making a difference regionally and nationally by joining forces across the system.

In a similar effort, sanctuary advisory councils are initiating discussions, engaging experts, and seeking the prioritization of the reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Council members acknowledge that this legislation defines their role, serves as the foundation for the relationship communities have with sanctuaries, and allows the ONMS to implement the guidance they provide regarding sanctuary operations and activities.

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

1990, and the most recent was for the *Monitor* NMS in 2005. The ONMS supports sanctuary advisory councils and their working groups through staff support, holding local council meetings, and hosting annual advisory council summits.

The investment the ONMS has made in sanctuary advisory councils has allowed councils to grow in number, membership, and impact on the program. As ONMS continues to build upon these effective community partnerships, the role of councils will continue to evolve into a dynamic system engaging on the critical issues of our time. Acting as a system will allow the councils to have a broad-based effect regionally and nationally, while still acting locally.

Acting Locally, Engaging Regionally and Nationally

The topic of ocean acidification galvanized advisory councils, with thirteen councils taking action on the issue between 2008 and 2010. Actions included educating council members on the topic, passing resolutions highlighting it as a substantial threat to sanctuary resources, and urging NOAA to take action at the local, regional and national level.

As additional issues emerge and threaten sanctuary resources, advisory councils will be critical to tackling the challenges of the time. The ONMS is committed to initiating a multi-faceted approach to enhance

collaboration of advisory council leadership and support at all levels of the program and to enhance the connection of these functional elements to program leadership. This structure will permit sanctuary advisory councils to ascend beyond a collection of individual site programs into a deliberate, coordinated, national program that is larger than the sum of its parts.

As a system of national marine sanctuaries it is possible to “create broad-based effects of sufficient scale to be of nationwide significance”. As a system of sanctuary advisory councils, the results can be even more impressive on a broad scale, working in our “own backyards” while also creating an impact regionally, nationally and even internationally.



Photo: Nicole Capps

ONMS Director, Dan Basta, engages advisory council chairs in a dialogue on national-scale critical issues relevant to sanctuaries.



Photo: Nicole Capps

Sanctuary advisory council management staff participating in the 2010 Council Coordinators Meeting in Port Angeles, Washington.



Photo: Nicole Capps

Pacific Islands Region advisory council representatives and support staff discuss “cross-pollination” and council collaboration.