

Highlights and Major Action Items from 2011 SAC Summit

May 2, 2011 through May 4, 2011

Introduction

- On Monday, May 2nd, the council chairs/representatives attending the 2011 SAC Summit participated in a Council Chair Only Dinner. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the council chairs to discuss topics of interest and share experiences and information.
- ONMS recommended, at the request of Dan Basta, that a portion of the time during this dinner be dedicated to discussing the possibility of organizing a council chair executive body that would lead and help facilitate information exchange and interaction among all council chairs across the country.
- ONMS provided a short description of the development of the Council Cross-Cut and the Council Executive Committee (CEC) as an example of an executive body and to illustrate the potential parallel between the CEC and a council chair executive body.
- The council chair executive body discussion morphed into one regarding a National Advisory Council, and the chairs/representatives agreed that Chris Harrold (MBNMS) and Bruce Popham (FKNMS) should speak with Dan Basta during lunch on Tuesday, May 3rd, regarding this matter.
- At the opening of the Council Chair Dinner with ONMS leadership, Dan Basta asked Chris Harrold (MBNMS) and Bruce Popham (FKNMS) to provide an overview of the topics discussed at their lunch meeting.
- Chris Harrold provided an overview of the various perspectives discussed with regard to establishing a National Advisory Council, as well as the request to consider restructuring the annual SAC meeting to help resolve and/or discuss specific council-related issues/concerns.

National Advisory Council

- Council chairs/representatives in attendance expressed interest in establishing a National Advisory Council.
- Council chairs/representatives were interested in knowing whether Dan Basta supports establishing a National Advisory Council. Dan commented that he does; however, he reminded the council chairs that their primary responsibility is to their respective sites and councils.
- There was some discussion whether a formal body/council was necessary at the national level and, if so, who from each council would participate on this national council.
- Additional discussions pursued as to the value of having participation by the current chairs, former chairs, and/or other experienced council members – with some supporting a single (chair) representative. Others suggested including non-officer council members or the entire executive committee (chair, vice chair, secretary if applicable) from each site-specific council or seeking further input from full councils regarding who should serve on this national council.
- Discussions pursued as to potential differences in the experience, term limits, and succession of council chairs.
- ONMS agreed to review current national policy on council officer term limits, how it would mesh with a national council, and concerns about continuity, institutional memory and succession.

- ONMS agreed to begin drafting a charter for a National Advisory Council and to gather input/feedback from council chairs along the way.
- There was consensus by the group that a National Advisory Council would need to meet more than once a year (e.g., 3-4 months between calls/meetings).
- Potential topics that a National Advisory Council could address may include:
 - Site evaluation list
 - Engaging “not the usual partners”
 - Revamping our “programming”
 - Other topics TBD based on what ONMS would like input on

Restructure Summit/Annual Meeting

- Council chairs/representatives asked ONMS to consider restructuring the annual SAC Summit in such a way to better assist them in resolving and/or discussing specific council-related issues/concerns.
- Council chairs/representatives expressed interest in having at least a 2-hour open session on future SAC Summit agendas to allow them to work together to develop solutions.
- Some expressed concern regarding the development of top-down, national-centric agendas.
- There was some discussion that ONMS could hold meetings occasionally that model more concept/paper-focused meetings by the National Park Service. There seemed to be an openness to participate in this type of conference (every couple of years) provided the SAC Summit was included as part of it.
- Dan Basta supported additional and more direct involvement of superintendents with council chairs and possibly in future SAC Summits. The level of participation by the superintendents still needs to be resolved/evaluated, but one suggestion was that ONMS could consider co-locating the SAC Summit with a Leadership Team meeting or holding it in DC again.

Information Exchange beyond the SAC Summit

- Council chairs/representatives would like to see a repository, such as a higher-level database or website, to facilitate the sharing of advice, experience, and council products.
- A Wiki-type database housing minutes, letters, resolutions, etc. was recommended, as was a website identifying contacts for all council-related issues (e.g, water quality, youth seats, sister sanctuaries).
- All agreed that this type of information exchange would allow councils to learn from other sites/councils and, more specifically, how they have dealt with similar issues.
- It was noted that the Council Executive Committee (new executive body composed of council coordinators) is currently working on this issue and that HQ sees this as a priority. This issue was first proposed to the council coordinators at the 2010 Council Coordinator Meeting.
- It was suggested that a group email would be another good way to facilitate communication, and ONMS agreed to send out a reminder with the existing group email addresses (e.g., council chairs, council coordinators) and appropriate use of these emails.
- Additionally, council chairs/representatives requested more open and frequent communication, and they specifically asked to work with Dan Basta and others in ONMS

to setup conference calls, webinars, or some other means (via Doodle polls) to facilitate this exchange.

- Create a list of what each council wants to learn about or use national coordinator to exchange information and arrange relevant calls (3-4 months between calls).
- Each chair/representative could be provided an opportunity to discuss what his/her respective council has accomplished between calls/meetings.
- Dan Basta mentioned the importance of superintendents engaging directly with council chairs, and the need for them to meet regularly (rather than haphazardly) with council chairs. Some council chairs/representatives expressed a desire to have greater access to their superintendents; others commented that they have open access already.
- Others recognized a need for ONMS to do a better job of getting information to council members (especially chairs).
- Dan Basta mentioned that he asked the ONMS education coordinators to consider developing training modules to assist during new council member orientation and that they would be discussing this at their upcoming meeting in Scituate, Massachusetts.
- There was interest in having council members attend meetings for other advisory councils and in ONMS helping fund these exchanges.
- Bruce Popham (FKNMS) mentioned the succession plan that his council has to ensure continuity within his executive committee. It was suggested that ONMS could review this as a possible model/option for councils to utilize – paying particular attention to the impact of this option on “free and open” elections and the need to have some “fresh blood” in certain situations.

Projection

- ONMS will redistribute Dan Basta’s “Our Challenge” piece to all council chairs/representatives. There is a section in this document that speaks to “how to project” and how projecting in special places has more meaning than anywhere else.
- One place in particular that this was discussed at the 2011 SAC Summit was with regard to better projecting or telling the story of jobs, economies, etc.

Sanctuary Designation and Expansion

- ONMS will provide the council chairs/representatives with the number of land (e.g., MPA, national parks) versus sanctuary designations over the last 10 years or so.
- Council chairs/representatives suggested that ONMS should work to increase its GIS capabilities and continue to work with partners, communities, etc. to identify and evaluate potential new sanctuaries and address boundary expansions.
- There was a general recognition that it was time to look at potential new sanctuaries and reactivate the Site Evaluation List (SEL).

Socioeconomics/Sustaining Our Sanctuary Communities

- ONMS will provide the council chairs/representatives with quantitative information regarding the value of national marine sanctuaries to local economies once the final outreach products are complete.

- It was suggested that ONMS work with council members to develop products (e.g., videos, testimony questionnaire, statements from each council member expressing the connection between his/her seat and local economy) or setup appointments with key officials, leadership, etc. to support the qualitative aspects as well.
- Council chairs/representatives recommended that superintendents work with their respective councils to facilitate community-based discussions on gathering local socioeconomic data to develop a more complete “story” of the ONMS (and individual sanctuary’s) impact on the sustainability of coastal communities.
- Council chairs/representatives recommended that superintendents and council members work with local academic institutions to leverage resources and capacities in support of gathering and analyzing additional local socioeconomic information.

Additional Highlights, Actions and Suggestions

- ***International Partnerships***
ONMS will provide the council chairs/representatives information on the international training programs facilitated by Anne Walton through the ONMS. ONMS would like to see each sanctuary, where applicable, explore international connections to further resource protection.
- ***Involvement of Community Colleges***
ONMS will provide (upon the return of Brad Barr from sabbatical) a list of contacts and ideas on how to further site involvement with community colleges to councils chairs.
- ***National Marine Sanctuaries Act***
All council members should re-read the NMSA.
- ***National Marine Sanctuary Foundation***
NMSF offered to make appropriate introductions between Executive Directors of local Friends’ Groups (8 total) and council members.

ONMS reminded council members on several occasions (e.g., during discussions regarding a potential D.C. meeting) that they are prohibited from contacting Congress on behalf of or as an advisory council member. Council members may contact members of Congress as private citizens on their own concerns as private citizens.

- ***ONMS Image within Fishing Communities***
A suggestion was made that ONMS should work to improve its image within the fishing community (especially within the recreational fishing community).
- ***Savannah Ocean Exchange***
Council chairs/representatives were asked to consider distributing the SAVOX Call for Solutions (deadline May 31, 2011) to their respective councils and others within their community, professional, etc. networks. The original email was distributed by Karen Brubeck on April 4, 2011 and additional information can be found at: <http://savannahoceanexchange.com/>.

- ***Science***
ONMS agreed to provide the West Coast Ocean Acidification Plan (which all superintendents have) to the council chairs/representatives. ONMS would also like to provide additional information to council chairs/representatives that better highlights the intent, purpose and potential financial benefit to pursuing sentinel site science in ONMS.
- ***Volunteerism***
Council members expressed the need for increased resources and staff to further support volunteer programs, as well as all programs (e.g., monitoring) at the site-level.
- ***Youth Seat***
All councils that have not already done so should consider discussing and possibly including a youth seat or working group as part of their council.