

October __, 2006

Council Chair Name
Council Chair Address

Dear Name:

I am pleased to invite you to the 2007 Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting. This year's meeting will be held the week of May 7, 2007, in Newport News, Virginia, hosted by the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary.

This is the seventh year the National Marine Sanctuary Program has held this major national meeting. These meetings bring together our collective experiences and wisdom on advisory councils, share lessons learned, and discuss national level issues. Most importantly, it is a time to thank you, our dedicated and passionate volunteers, who work so diligently with us to protect our sanctuary resources.

This letter and the attached agenda and case study guidelines will prepare you for the meeting. Where action is required, the language is in ***bolded italics***. When providing your comments on the agenda or any other information, please provide it to your sanctuary superintendent and/or council coordinator who will immediately forward it to Karen Brubeck, our National Advisory Council Coordinator.

Meeting Format Changes

The NMSP fine-tunes this meeting on an annual basis in response to thoughts and ideas from staff and yourselves--this year is no exception. We propose two significant changes to the 2007 meeting:

- 1. Regional focus to one meeting day.** During the 2006 Chairs Dinner there were many inquiries about the new regional structure of our program, the impacts on your councils and the sites, and the possible interactions you as council members may have with your regional superintendents. Discussions during that session continued to highlight common opportunities, collaborations, projects and improvements, as well as the benefit of close communication among the sites and councils within a region. During the 2007 meeting, the NMSP will facilitate and foster those communications and relationships by dedicating a significant portion of the meeting to a regional focus (See below for more information and attached agenda).

- 2. Incorporate national level discussions and a select few case studies.** For a number of years we asked each 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 topics (14 case studies used two full days of a meeting). In 2006 we eliminated case studies from the agenda completely and replaced them with a panel, a topical discussion, and a number of national presentations. In 2007, in response to the meeting evaluations, we propose to incorporate what the NMSP feels is the best balance—two facilitated national level discussions (Community Values and MPR Process: Lessons Learned) and one case study from each region (See below for more information and attached agenda).

Draft Meeting Agenda

The draft meeting agenda is enclosed. Please provide input to Karen Brubeck (via your council coordinator) on the substance of the proposed agenda by January 1, 2006. Ideally I would like the full council to review the agenda and provide input. However, if there is no meeting prior to the deadline, it is sufficient for the council chair to review and provide input and then brief the full council on the agenda.

There are several items of note within the agenda:

- ❖ **Council members do NOT meet at all on Tuesday, May 8. Council members meet Wednesday, May 9 and Thursday, May 10.**
- ❖ Dave Alberg, Sanctuary Superintendent, *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary will provide a welcome and a presentation on the *Monitor*.
- ❖ I will provide an overview on the State of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, touching on everything from budget issues to major activities and projects the program is involved with.
- ❖ **Regional Case Studies:** Your regional superintendent will work with the sanctuary superintendents, council coordinators and councils in your region to identify ONE case study to be presented from the region. Case studies should deal with one major issue or project faced by the council or councils within the region during the prior year. The case study will: (1) Describe the issue or project faced by the council or councils within the region during the past year; (2) Describe the actions taken by the council/councils; (3) Describe the decision made or action taken by the sanctuary or regional superintendent; and (4) Detail any lessons learned. (See attached case study guidelines.) One council chair

will conduct the presentation at the meeting. Site staff will be available to assist with the development of the presentation. The council coordinator and the regional superintendent will also be on hand to field questions for the discussion portion following the case study presentation

- ❖ **Regional Breakouts:** Council chairs and coordinators will break out by region. NMSP headquarters staff will move among the groups. The regional superintendent will facilitate the session. Each regional breakout group will be given the latitude to use the time the best way they see fit. These will be **informal discussions**, allowing chairs and coordinators an opportunity to meet and interact with their regional superintendent. The NMSP would like to encourage use of this session for “cross-pollination” of councils and issues within the region-- identification and discussion of common opportunities, collaborations, projects and improvements.
- ❖ **Regional Breakout Reports:** Each regional breakout group will identify an individual to summarize key points of discussion and next steps, and present to the larger group of meeting participants.
- ❖ The evening tour of The *Monitor* Center and reception will offer opportunities for mingling with NMSP headquarters staff, regional superintendents, *Monitor* NMS staff, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation staff, meeting participants, as well as our partners in the Newport News area.
- ❖ I've heard from many of you that we need to move inland from the coast to engage all American's in the importance of their national marine sanctuaries. In this session, we want to hear from you on what you feel works in engaging those in sanctuary communities and away from the coast to become sanctuary stewards. We are inviting an expert in community involvement and community values in conservation to help provide insight and vision for the discussion.
Please use the following questions as preparation for the meeting and discussions with your council and bring the input with you:
 - ***What values do you place on marine resources in general and sanctuaries in particular, and why?***
 - ***What values should the NMSP seek to build in the 300 million Americans that do not live near sanctuaries to convince them to take action and/or change their behaviors in ways that will benefit marine resources?***
- ❖ **Management Plan Review Process: Lessons Learned Session:** The NMSP will provide a brief 15 minute presentation, followed by an extended, facilitated

discussion among council chairs and coordinators. The NMSP has reached critical milestones in the MPR processes at numerous sites during the past year. It is crucial to immediately capture lessons learned from those most directly involved so we can continually improve the process. Your input will be a key piece to the NMSP re-evaluating how we do MPRs, and will figure into the revision of the MPR Handbook. ***Please use the following questions as preparation for the meeting and discussions with your council and bring the input with you:***

- ***What worked or is working well during your site's MPR?***
 - ***What hasn't or isn't working well during your site's MPR?***
 - ***What is the one most important suggestion you would offer to the NMSP regarding MPR?***
- ❖ Close Out Session includes: (1) a summary of meeting follow-up/action items; (2) written meeting evaluations; and (3) volunteers for FY08 agenda working group.
- ❖ At your request, we will once again hold a very informal "Chairs Only" evening session over dinner. This is an opportunity to discuss any procedural, troubleshooting or other concerns or issues with myself and the other Chairs. ***Please bring discussion topics with you.***

All discussions will be two-way information exchanges between the NMSP staff and council chairs. The NMSP seeks 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.

It is also important to note that although the NMSP had a large number of requests to return to the longer meeting format with field trips and time for additional discussions, due to budgetary limitations we are unable to honor this request at this time. We hope to return to the longer meeting format when the budget improves. Meanwhile, we encourage you to extend your stay, on your own, to take advantage of the many local attractions Newport News has to offer.

Next Steps

You can expect the final agenda and meeting and travel logistics in early February.

Please share this information with your entire council and include pertinent items on your meeting agendas. The goal is to allow your council opportunity to discuss, deliberate, and prepare for the annual meeting. Please contact Karen Brubeck with any questions regarding the meeting.

I look forward to seeing you in Newport News!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director,
National Marine Sanctuary Program

Attachments:

Draft 2007 Annual Sanctuary Advisory Council Chairs and Coordinators Meeting
Agenda

Case Study Guidelines

Cc: Regional Superintendents
Sanctuary Superintendents
Sanctuary Advisory Council Coordinators