



Science Needs Assessment Maritime Cultural Landscapes

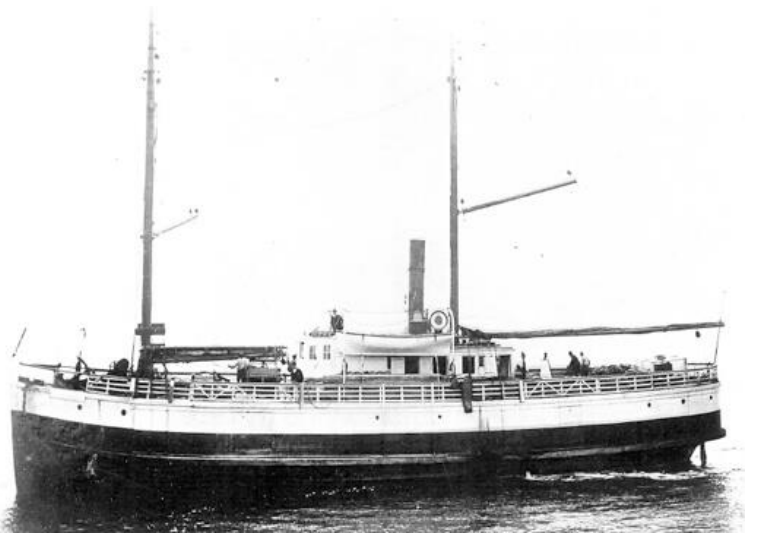
Conservation Issue

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act and site regulations mandate the management and protection of cultural and historical resources in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is placing increasing emphasis on the development of maritime heritage programs to identify and protect submerged archaeological sites and to increase public awareness and appreciation of the maritime history associated with national marine sanctuaries.

Description

The history of California's central coast is predominantly a maritime one. From the days of the early Ohlone inhabitants to the European-American exploration and settlement of California to the present, coastal waterways have been a main route of travel, subsistence, and supply. Ocean-based commerce and industries (e.g., shipping, extraction, fisheries, military, recreation, tourism, exploration, research, and aesthetics) are important to the maritime history, modern economy, and social character of this region.

For the National Marine Sanctuary System, maritime heritage is defined as the wide variety of tangible and intangible elements (historic, cultural, and archaeological resources) that represent human connections to our Great Lakes and ocean areas.



Steam schooner *Gipsy*, also known as “Old Perpetual Motion” for 36 years of freight service along the California coast. Photo: Randle Biddle Collection

ONMS is adopting the maritime cultural landscape (MCL) approach as a foundational framework for managing and preserving historic and cultural resources within our national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments. The MCL approach provides a comprehensive framework for better identifying, understanding, and interpreting the variety and significance of maritime heritage resources throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System. MCLs are geographic areas where the relationship between human activity and the marine environment has created meaning, a sense of place. That meaning may be expressed by historic shipwrecks, sacred locations, resource gathering, or other historical, archaeological, or cultural expressions. Understanding MCLs as places where activities intersect with the environment gives context to the wide variety of heritage resources. MBNMS is working with ONMS, West Coast national marine sanctuaries, and local agencies to implement the MCL approach across the National Marine Sanctuary System.

Data and Analysis Needs

1. Locations where MCL assessment might be applicable and beneficial
2. Documentation and research on specific wrecks or associated historic sites
3. Human uses and interactions with the environment as related to MCLs
4. Connections between maritime heritage elements, human activity, and significant features in the landscape and ecosystem

Potential Products

- Site history narratives
- Maps and charts depicting the locations of all known maritime heritage resources
- Archaeological reports that demonstrate significance and integrity of cultural and historical resources
- MCL assessment for MBNMS
- Updated inventory of known submerged cultural and historical sites in MBNMS ([MBNMS shipwreck database](#); [Smith & Hunter, 2003](#))

Suggested Scientific Approach and Actions

- Conduct archival research to gather historical information to support MCL initiatives and proposals
- Conduct field surveys to identify maritime heritage resources (e.g., remote sensing or maritime archaeology survey techniques)
- Conduct oral history surveys with local subject matter experts and knowledge keepers

Key Partners

ONMS, West Coast national marine sanctuaries, academic institutions, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, California Office of Historic Preservation, California Sea Grant, California State Historic Preservation Office, California State Lands Commission, California State Parks, local Indigenous communities and tribal groups, local museums, local historic parks, Monterey History and Art Association, National Archives and Records Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command



Pigeon Point Light Station, Pescadero, California. Photo: Robert Schwemmer/NOAA

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