

**Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
-September 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: September 21, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Sheboygan City Hall, 828 Center Avenue, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Ellen Brody, Matt Brookhart, Beth Dieveney, Russ Green, LeAnn Hogan, Caitlin Zant

SAC Members: Joshua Bastianello, John Broihahn, Mary Giffels, Melissa Gutierrez, Scott Huebner, John Janssen, Jeff Lamont, Richard Larsen, Michael Loescher, Bill Moren, Patrick Neu, Bill Schanen, Dawn St. George

SAC Alternates: David Bennett, Kevin Cullen, Michelle Damian, James Falkowski, Travis Gross, Letitia Hase, Chris Houghton, Mike Jajtner, Jason Prigge, Michael Vandersteen, Vanessa VanderWeele

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Aaron Brault – Sheboygan County, Paul Hacker – Manitowoc County, Daina Penkiunas – State of Wisconsin, Ryan Sorenson – City of Sheboygan

Guests: N/A

Media: N/A

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Sheboygan Mayor Ryan Sorenson welcomed everyone and spoke about the sanctuary. It could be a great boon for tourism, especially outdoor and water related. This past summer they hosted their first power boat race for Sheboygan. 40,000 tourists and high spending that weekend. Great opportunities over the next several years – STEM, history, tourism, education about the Great Lakes in general.

Matt Brookhart, Eastern Region Director, thanked the council members for their service of time to Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary (WSCNMS). Sanctuary Advisory Councils are fundamental to how sanctuaries are managed. This is a time of unprecedented growth for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries with so many new sites being proposed and designated. WSCNMS, along with Mallows Bay National Marine Sanctuary were the first to be designated in 20 years. Opportunity and SAC role is fundamental with these new sites.

The Advisory Council SAC Chairs meeting is next week in Oswego, New York (proposed Lake Ontario NMS location). Scott Huebner the WSCNMS SAC Chair will be there. During the meeting we will be discussing the future of sanctuaries – where do we go now, rapidly changing environment and all the opportunities and challenges. Highlight the siting study and opportunities that come with that.

The Eastern Region Office team is meeting in Wisconsin this week to discuss our priorities, including how we support WSCNMS in the coming year, particularly related to the siting study and establishing a presence in the sanctuary communities.

SAC BUSINESS:

The council reviewed the minutes from the July 20, 2023 council meeting. Jeffrey Lamont motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Patrick Neu. The meeting minutes were approved.

Open education alternate position. Please help spread the word. Applications are due September 29, 2023.

Working Group Reports

Friends Working Group - The Friends working group has met three times since last SAC meeting. Purpose – how to set up a friends group (1) independent 501c3 or (2) chapter of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The group met with Jeff Gray, superintendent of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS), who currently has a Friends group, to get some insight on lessons learned, pros cons of how to set up a group. We need to determine the charger – what would the friends group do (fund raise, plan and host events, grant writing, etc.). The working group walked through the pro/con list they put together.

Outreach Working Group - Started to create a procedure to identify the outreach events that are happening so that they have a list and can determine what presence to have at events (Staff, SAC).

Ghost Ship Event – looking to have the 2024 event in Sheboygan, hosted by Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association.

Film Festival Working Group - Met on August 31. They contacted Stephanie Gandulla at TBNMS who has been running a film festival since 2012 to learn about how they operate their film festival. TBNMS has partnered with the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival, they joined with a nominal fee. Stephanie is reaching out to see if WSCNMS could be a rider on the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival in 2024.

Considering potential sites to show simultaneously/virtually (Mariners Museum, local theatre.) Talked about shared revenue models. Determined year one to do for free.

Ghost Ships Festival is being revitalized and determining if film festival could be aligned with this event. The timing is important Ocean Film Festival is January, cold season so it's a good time for that. Ghost Ships Festival is March, diving season starting.

2024 Meeting Dates

The council discussed the proposed meeting dates sent out with the agenda. Meetings would continue to be every other month, Thursday, rotating communities. The council agreed to the dates. WSCNMS staff will send out the final meeting schedule.

COMMUNITY UPDATE:

Sheboygan River Clean Up – Aaron Brault

- Project is about 10-years old; was a SuperFund site due to PCBs, PAHs
- Superfund cleaned up highest area of impact; had to identify other funds to clean up lower river and harbor area
- Also completed habitat restoration efforts
- Sheboygan was one of 43 impaired sites; Sheboygan had 9 of 14 impact to beneficial use
- Note the level of public outreach due to trucks leaving town every 3-5 minutes
- Highlighted level of partnership needed among range of entities
- Habitat restoration activities prioritized public property largely due to permissions
- Sheboygan County funds its own water improvement
- Community development along the river
- Volunteer community monitoring

Questions:

Any efforts to make the average farm comply to what the CAFOS (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) have to do?

Note that even an average farm can operate within 5 feet of a critical waterway

Is the city/county working for the environmental good? Yes, and is a legislative issue

Visit Sheboygan – Amy Wilson

- DMO – Destination Marketing Organization

Questions:

Is the Viking Cruise ship coming in? Not soon as need to plan years out.

SANCTUARY UPDATE:

- Summer Research Scholar Update
 - o Summer intern: Wisconsin Maritime Museum recent donation of artifacts, close to 3000 artifacts from Niagara
 - o Education Cruises: (1) students (2) Educators
- Measure value of sanctuary – baseline economic study for FY24; lead economist on project will be on site next week

- Mapped the entire sanctuary; allow better management of sanctuary – historical and natural resources; opportunity to learn about geography; next summer working on habitat maps
 - Question about providing maps on-line and available to the public
- Grant being drafted to bring technology to document wrecks

- Facility Siting Study
 - Russ Green
 - Identifying locations
 - Community driven, 60 people; six working groups to help identify what communities would like a NOAA presence
 - Isn't one place but connecting communities
 - Funding is not available – did a study to identify where/why this is an area to invest in
 - City of Two Rivers – pump station; close to shallow shipwrecks
 - Manitowoc – city and maritime museum; partner and create a visible artifact site and double as an education site for both NOAA and museum (renovate old car)
 - Update existing sanctuary exhibit
 - Sheboygan – Visit Sheboygan site; partnership with Science on a River; focus on STEM and on water education opportunities
 - Port Washington – downtown vacant storefront site and 1860 lighthouse use small generator building
 - Madison – want to collaborate to highlight Wisconsin role in maritime history; engage broader community
 - Maritime Trail – interpretive markers along coastline, would integrate with existing coastal trail
 - Administrative offices, research facility, and housing for researchers
 - Cost – range of \$ 8-12 M

Matt remarks

- Congressional appropriations process, makes it difficult to plan ahead as we are never sure how much we will have in a given year and outyears
- Every federal agency is going to the hill to identify funding needs
- Highlighted distinction between ONMS and NPS area and funding; gives a window in how much congress cares about oceans and great lakes
- Task for ONMS and SACs is to determine how to get the appropriations to increase to support the needs of these nationally significant resources and places
- How do we bring these places to the public – through Visitor Centers
- ONMS did receive funds through the IRA – funds to support designations and for some infrastructure (Stellwagen Bank NMS \$15million for Visitor Center)
- Acknowledge power of Visitor Center

- How to get funds for these projects – first step is to develop the strategy to articulate the need and vision; to then promote, and find the mechanisms to bring the funds
- Uncertainty of congressional appropriations makes planning difficult; need Congressional champions, seem to have one in Senator Baldwin

Questions and Comments

Q: Extra hurdle with sunset provision; 5 years review if certain conditions are met.

A: Does not believe that this will be a concern; do not foresee that coming to fruition; but not a good strategy on ONMS part to wait to put the idea of the visitor center out there.

Q: Muskegon Lake, university operates two tourist research vessels, know how to do some magic; worth a visit to see how they have developed the operations.

A: Russ, yes will check it out.

C: Appreciate that the plan takes advantage of existing buildings and projects.

Q: Is Senator Baldwin the only one providing support?

A: Rep. Grothman, staff was at event highlighting new state historical museum and seemed supportive; common theme of support is when there is an economic incentive/growth/tourism

C: Best resources in US, all the anglers coming here to fish; weather keeps them from fishing; tie economic impact report back to anglers; Sheboygan is #1 charter fishing site in Lake Michigan, people are already here; tie the charter boat captains to the sanctuary/visitor center; get the ear of Congress through economic impact of sportfishing; tell the story about the historical resources; recovery of the ecosystem through bringing salmon to the lake

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One possible strategy to collaborate with STEM training; conference at museum at Manitowoc next month, important way for young people to engage; second strategy is to partner with research vessels, several on the coast; *Articus* recently in Port of Washington – vessels of opportunity to partner with, bring them to ports, research; Largest vessel is EPA on its way back to Lake Michigan, take advantage of that.

SAC Chair Close

Consider contributing to one of the working groups.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, November 16 at 6pm**, in Manitowoc, exact location to be determined.