

**Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary  
Advisory Council  
-January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes-**

**Date: January 18, 2024**

**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Location: Port Washington State Bank Community Room, 218 E. Washington Street,  
Port Washington, Wisconsin**

**Meeting Attendees**

**NOAA:** Russ Green, Caitlin Zant, Jean Prevo (virtually)

**SAC Members:** Brendon Baillod, Josh Bastianello, John Broihahn, Roland Chaloupka, Mary Ellen Giffels, Melissa Gutierrez, Scott Huebner, John Janssen, Jeffrey Lamont, William Moren, Dawn St. George

**SAC Alternates:** Dave Bennett, Michelle Damian, James Falkowski, Letitia Hase, Mike Jattner, Michael Loescher, Mike Vandersteen, Vanessa VanderWeele, John Wrostek

**Government Agency and Tribe Members:**

Paul Hacker – Manitowoc County, Ted Neitzke – City of Port Washington,  
Andrew Struck – Ozaukee County

**Guests:** Jeff Houghton, Philip Knier, Ashley Lemke, Gabriele Lubach, Greg Stamatelakys

**Media:** N/A

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

The meeting was called to order. Port Washington Mayor Ted Neitzke gave a welcome to the council and thanked them for their dedication to the sanctuary. Port Washington has always had a relationship not only with the tragedies on the Great Lakes but also the resources that have made that town defined by that body of water. Port Washington sits where a significant amount of industry took place. The lake is a wonderful resource and the city is committed to making sure that there is more access for the public. Port Washington is proud to be part of the sanctuary and the larger sanctuary system. Grateful that these are now protected waters forever.

**SAC BUSINESS:**

The council reviewed the minutes from the November 16, 2023 council meeting. Jeff Lamont motioned to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Bill Moren. The meeting minutes were approved by the council.

The application deadline for the Education (K-12) alternate position was January 31. Hoping to have the new member on board for our March meeting.

## **Working Group Reports**

### **Film Festival Working Group – Roland Chaloupka**

Working group members are Russ Green, Kevin Cullen, Caitlin Zant, Jean Prevo, Roland Chaloupka and Stephanie Gandulla from Thunder Bay as a resource. The group met on December 11 and discussed venue possibilities, including the Franciscan Center in Manitowoc. It is a 400-seat facility. Has a great social area that is just outside of the theater. Perfect parking. The cost is reasonable. Russ was able to get some funds approved to pay for the venue. The group made the decision to lock in the date to hold the venue. The proposed date is April 6, exact times have not been decided yet.

The group had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Director of the International Ocean Film Festival (IOFF) Ana Blanco. IOFF is where Thunder Bay gets the films for their festival. Over 950 films available. There is a fee to show these films. Caitlin will be in Alpena during the Thunder Bay's film festival; she will have the opportunity to view some of the films and get a feel for what their operation looks like. The goal is for her to come back with some good recommendations for our event.

The group will be meeting with Ana again in February and at that point are hoping to have films selected and get an idea of what the costs look like. When using the IOFF films, 25% of the content is required to be local content. Russ has some suggested films that could be used.

The film festival will most likely be a half-day or evening event. The content will be short films that are 4 to 20 minutes with one longer feature film. It was mentioned that Saturday might be better for attracting families. This event will be a great way to bring the ocean to the community.

We will be looking for help as we move forward, especially for advertising and helping at the event. The Manitowoc tourism department and the Wisconsin Maritime Museum are good partners that can help promote the festival, as well as some others. We will be relying on communities to help spread the word. Brendon Baillod said they could promote it at the upcoming Ghost Ships Festival.

Staff is looking into the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation possibly setting up an account so folks can make donations. The first year of the film festival is going to be free admission but we are looking into a way for attendees to pre-register on a website where they could also pay a donation. Hoping that if people love it, it could generate future donations. Pre-registration is also a good way to build our email contact list.

Maybe the festival could also include a little presentation on the sanctuary and the council.

### **Friends Working Group – Mary Ellen Giffels**

Working group members are Tish Hase, Jeff Lamont, John Wyrostek, Mary Ellen Giffels, Russ Green and Jean Prevo. Group has been meeting every two to three weeks. At the November meeting Jeff Lamont presented that the group recommended an independent 501c3. Since then, Russ has talked to the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the sanctuary system and they are supportive of us moving forward with this.

Accomplishments – secured a website domain [shipwreckcoastfriends.org](http://shipwreckcoastfriends.org) or [shipwreckfriends.com](http://shipwreckfriends.com), mapped steps to setup a 501c3 and drafted an initial budget.

Next steps - need to identify the initial board members, finalize mission and vision statements, complete the required application to submit with the state and then file with the state.

Also need to design a logo, design and create a website, setup a bank account, PO Box to collect checks and secure a QR code for receiving donations.

Working with Russ connecting us to Thunder Bay Friends to help get this up and running to take donations earmarked for starting the Friends.

Mary Ellen went over the three options for a budget to get this started, one that included pro-bono work and one without. The estimated costs range from \$750 to \$8,300 on the high end.

Does anyone know someone that might be willing to do any of the work (web design, logo, 501c3 filing) pro bono? Jeff Lamont said he has a lead on a lawyer who may be able to do the 501c3 work pro bono.

The group is hoping to be able to take tax deductible donations by March through the Friends of Thunder Bay, if necessary.

As a government agency Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary is not able to receive donations. The Friends group would be formed on behalf of the sanctuary to support its activities and programs. It will have a board, run its own finances and have fundraising capabilities.

If you can help, know someone that can or want to join the working group, please contact any member of the committee. Bill Moren offered to join the group.

### **Outreach Group – Vanessa VanderWeele**

The outreach working group members are David Bennett, John Wyrstek, Brandon Baillo, Paul Hacker, Vanessa VanderWeele and Russ Green. During their last meeting they talked about potential outreach events and opportunities. Those included:

Door County Historical Society – looking for a speaker in May  
Milwaukee Boat Show – late for this year but consider for 2025  
Port Washington Fish Days  
Two Rivers Fish Days

The group discussed the importance of legislative outreach. Working on talking and writing points for meetings, phone calls and letters. Working with Russ to figure out the best timing for these communications. Great Lakes Day is held in March in Washington, DC, the group is discussing how they can support those that are attending this event.

### **Ghost Ship Festival – Brendon Baillo**

The Ghost Ships Festival is scheduled for March 1-2 at the Inn at Maritime Bay, hosted by Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Society. Almost all of the booths have sold out already and tickets are available online. \$20 if you buy tickets online, \$25 at the door, under 18 are free. The sanctuary is sponsoring the Friday night event which includes a lecture by Wayne Lusardi, Michigan State Archaeologist, on the Tuskegee airplane project he's been working on for the past few years. Lee Murdock will also be performing Friday night after the lecture. Speakers from all around the Great Lakes, including Caitlin Zant on Saturday.

The sanctuary will also have a booth there. Looking to have 300-400 people in attendance. Volunteers are welcome for staffing this booth. The outreach team will work with Russ and Caitlin to come up with a staffing plan.

### **Resolution in Support of Facilities Strategy Response**

At our last meeting a resolution was passed by the advisory council and submitted to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. Russ shared the response that was received from Eastern Region Director, Matt Brookhart (see attached). The resolution will be helpful during visits to DC. Thank you very much for that resolution and support.

How could the local governments support the resolution that was passed by the council? Andrew Struck suggested a short presentation on the study from the sanctuary and then a resolution to follow. Russ will start an email chain with all the county reps on the council.

### **Thunder Bay Visit**

Visit to Thunder Bay is coming together, looking at May 17-19. There is a room block at the Holiday Inn Express in Alpena. The google poll results showed that most people want to carpool in groups. As this comes together, we can figure out the travel logistics. We would plan to meet

in Alpena that Friday evening. Members from the Mallows Bay NMS staff and community members will also be in attendance. The visit will include a sanctuary tour, presentations and reception with community members and Thunder Bay SAC. A Viking cruise ship will also be in port at that time.

#### **COMMUNITY UPDATE:**

##### **Submerged Landscape Archaeology in the Great Lakes - Ashley Lemke, Associate Professor of Anthropology, UW-Milwaukee**

Ashley Lemke from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee gave a presentation on her research in the Great Lakes. She is an archaeologist who works on land and underwater with a focus on submerged prehistoric landscapes. She has done much of her research in other parts of the Great Lakes but is interested in bringing her research to the WSCNMS.

She gave an overview of her project on the Alpena Amberley Ridge in Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary – hypothesized that caribou have crossed this ridge. She spoke about the process for finding these sites underwater and what features to look for. The process starts with large-scale mapping to get a sense of the lake-bottom looks like. Then start looking closer at the lake bottom to get a better picture of where the prehistoric people may have lived and zero in on it. They are very small, stone constructed features. Her research used old fashioned archaeology underwater - measuring, photos, etc. Through this research they are trying to get a good sense of what those ancient environments may have looked like. The fresh water preserves trees and wood much better than on land.

National Geographic “*Drain the Great Lakes*” series did a three-minute feature on the Alpena Amberly Ridge.

They have also developed a virtual reality tour. She showed examples of what that tour looks like.

It will be a natural extension of her research to start working in Lake Michigan. The university is very interested in working with the sanctuary.

#### **SANCTUARY UPDATE:**

The new State Archaeologist is Amy Rosebrough and she will be part of the council. The sanctuary is working with the state on mooring buoy permits, 30 permits underway. Hoping to get most of these in the water next year, but it takes a lot of coordinating with the state, DNR, Coast Guard and Lake Carriers Association. The installation will take two weeks on board the Coast Guard buoy tender vessel. It is an amazing asset and a great federal partnership.

Caitlin Zant recently attended the Society for Historical Archaeology conference in Oakland.

Staff also had the opportunity to give a sanctuary presentation at a neighborhood association meeting in Sheboygan. Staff are happy to attend meetings to present no matter the size group.

Last summer the sanctuary was able to do an education project that was funded by a grant from GLRI. They worked with partners to do an on-water program with students and educators. Russ showed the video linked [here](#).

This video will be used for promoting the sanctuary. Wanted to be able to use this a tool to share with a legislature or a staffer to show them that this is what the sanctuary is trying to build but we need their support to make it happen.

The sanctuary is working on doing small exhibits in each of the communities. Staff from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will be visiting next week to visit the locations and start working on exhibit designs. Russ gave an overview of the proposed sites and some of the ideas for each location. Locations are:

- Two Rivers - Point Beach – Interpretation and buoys on the shallow wrecks
- Two Rivers - Rogers Street Fishing Village – Static panels and videos
- Manitowoc - Wisconsin Maritime Museum – Small upgrade to the existing exhibit – opening in May
- *Badger* - Creating onboard exhibits
- Sheboygan - Sheboygan Visitor Center – *Science on a Sphere*
- Kohler-Andrae State Park – Already have a shipwreck exhibit and a theater, talked about having some stock films for them to show, good venue for outdoor signage
- Port Washington – Outdoor signage at the lighthouse, but really focus downtown at the Historical Society Resource Center

Excited to be able to do things in communities that people will be able to connect to. Plan to do signs in each community.

Planning to hire an education specialist this year, waiting for the federal budget. This position will help with outreach events.

The group discussed different opportunities for bringing more awareness to the public. Scott mentioned that we would like to start the grab a beer event next month, everyone bring a friend which will help get more people involved and create awareness of the sanctuary. We will email out more information.

John Wyrostek mentioned that they are doing a couple of public programs in Two Rivers with Caitlin presenting. Focused on bringing the sanctuary to public.

Film Fest and the Ghost Ships' sponsorship are also creating sanctuary awareness.

Greg Stamatelakys mentioned that next week in Milwaukee the International Shipmasters Association is holding their 134<sup>th</sup> annual convention. 75 licensed captains from around the country. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the sanctuary to use some of their vessels for taking out small groups for education opportunities. Can think of several vessels that might be useful for that. The schooner in Manitowoc is also interested in potentially partnering with the sanctuary.

Can we create a calendar with all of the events happening? Russ, suggested creating a Google calendar. Someone else suggested posting it on Facebook and eventually listing it on a Friends' website.

John Broihahn asked if someone could send out the multibeam map? A separate session looking at the multibeam stuff could be interesting. Could have an event for SAC members to come and explore it together.

**MARCH MEETING AGENDA DISCUSSION:**

No items were suggested.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**ADJOURN:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, March 21 at 6pm**, in Two Rivers, exact location to be determined.

**Action Items:**

- Create a google calendar for listing events, outreach group to help manage it
- Send out multibeam map

**2024 WSCNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:**

March 21 – Two Rivers  
May 16 – Sheboygan  
July 18 – Manitowoc  
September 19 – Port Washington  
November 21 – Two Rivers



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**Office of National Marine Sanctuaries**  
**Eastern Region**  
1305 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

January 8, 2024

Dear Mr. Heubner:

I recently received a November 16, 2023 resolution from the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary (WSCNMS) Advisory Council expressing support for NOAA to implement the findings and recommendations in the recent sanctuary facility study.

I appreciate council members taking the time to learn about the study and discuss the merits of its community-based approach. It's essential to have the advisory council's perspective on this important document for WSCNMS, local communities and the State of Wisconsin. Thank you for your leadership on this effort.

The timing of this study is excellent. In its current strategic plan, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has identified development of infrastructure as a top priority. I firmly believe that the facilities and visitor experiences identified in the WSCNMS Facility Study are key to the sanctuary's success, relevance, and connection to the public it serves.

As discussed at the September council meeting, the path to completion for infrastructure projects like this is not always straightforward, easy, or certain. However, throughout the sanctuary system, there are many examples of similar facility projects that have transformed the way our sanctuaries fulfill their mission and engage the public. Both myself and Russ Green have experienced this first-hand, and we are committed to doing all we can to bring the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS facility vision to reality.

Sincerely,

Matt Brookhart  
Eastern Regional Director

