

**Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
February 26th, 2025**

Advisory Committee Members Present:

Peter Auster, Mystic Aquarium; University of Connecticut
Jessica Coakley, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Jenn Eckerle, California Natural Resources Agency; California Ocean Protection Council
Deanna Erickson, Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve
Kirsten Grorud-Colvert, Department of Integrative Biology for Oregon State University
Martha Guyas, American Sportfishing Association
Heather Hall, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jaime Jahncke (virtual), California Current Group, Point Blue Conservation Science
Amy Kenney, National Ocean Protection Coalition
Aaron Kornbluth, Akorn Environmental Consulting
Joseph Oatman (virtual), Nez Perce Tribe
Eric Reid, New England Fisheries Management Council
Donald Schug, Northern Economies, Inc.
Peter Stauffer, Surfrider Foundation
Angelo Villagomez, Center for American Progress
Lela DeVine, EarthEcho International
Anthony Dvaskas, Orsted Americas
Heather Hall, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Federal Agency Representatives, non-voting members:

Stacy Aguilera-Peterson, National Science Foundation
Ronald Howard, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service

NOAA Staff in Attendance:

John Armor, Director, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Kelly Denit, Director, NOAA Fisheries' Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Lauren Wenzel, Director, National Marine Protected Areas Center, NOAA
Heather Sagar, Senior Policy Advisor, NOAA Fisheries
Ellie Roberts, Policy Analyst, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
Maureen Brooks, Ocean Portfolio Advisor, NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
Josh Lott, Manager, NOS Policy Program, NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Amanda Sullivan, NOAA Office for Coastal Management
Gabrielle Hillyer, Knauss Fellow
Amanda Kirkland, Knauss Fellow

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Meeting welcome and introductions

John Armor, Director, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Committee

Designated Federal Official

Ellie Roberts, Program Analyst for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Amy Kenney, MCAM Advisory Committee Chair

The meeting was called to order at 2:03pm ET, everyone was thanked for joining the meeting by the NOAA Designated Federal Official (DFO). The DFO acknowledged his gratitude to the subcommittees' work since the last full Federal Advisory Committee meeting in December 2024 and how he was looking forward to hearing all about the updates for the subcommittees' work. The DFO acknowledged that NOAA is still working through the transition to a new administration and that there are many questions from Committee members on many issues.

Ellie Roberts, Program Analyst for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries provided a brief overview of the meeting platform.

Amy Kenney, MCAM Advisory Committee Chair, welcomed the Committee. The Chair noted that the Committee's work started less than a year ago, and commended the team for their work over the past year. Kenney recognized the work of the subcommittees, and the more recent virtual Committee meeting in December. The Chair noted that this is the fifth Committee meeting and reiterated the gratitude for NOAA staff and the work we do everyday, as well as the richness of deliberation and work products from the subcommittees. Kenney also acknowledged the dedication of the subcommittee co-chairs for their dedication in moving the objectives forward while working with many different perspectives, and acknowledged that the way our Committee has operated sets a standard and embodies what a Committee can accomplish.

Member introductions and icebreaker.

Kenney described that the meeting will follow a similar structure to the last full Committee meeting with time for sharing by all Committee members and staff, followed by reports from the two subcommittees. Each member in attendance shared a bit about themselves, including the organization they work for and reflections on their work with the Committee over the past year. Many of the Committee members noted that they felt inspired and excited about the work of the Committee, and felt encouraged by the participation, knowledge, and dedication found within the Committee's members.

Effectiveness and Outcomes Subcommittee Presentation and Discussion

Pete Stauffer and Jessica Coakley, Effectiveness and Outcomes Subcommittee Chairs

Stauffer, the subcommittee chair, briefly shared background on the subcommittee, including recognition of the subcommittee members and NOAA advisors, the subcommittee work plan and the subcommittee's current area of focus, which includes tracking conservation progress

and the Conservation and Stewardship Atlas. Stauffer introduced Jessica Coakley, the subcommittee vice chair, and recognized her tireless dedication to the development of the subcommittee draft. Stauffer recapped the portion of the Committee's charge assigned to the subcommittee: "How can NOAA best leverage our area-based management tools, investments, and authorities to deliver biodiversity conservation, access to nature, and climate resilience outcomes?" Stauffer then detailed the subcommittee's three draft recommendations, focused on: the utility of the Atlas; incorporating new data sets and other relevant baseline information; and improving how we assess management and conservation outcomes.

The Committee then engaged in a discussion of the draft recommendations. Stauffer noted that the Committee should focus on the durability and utility of the Atlas for the incoming administration.

For the first recommendation on the utility of the Atlas, Stauffer noted the difference between the current Atlas, and a future version that could be more built out with state and non-federal data. Committee members suggested adding a sentence indicating the Atlas is a living tool that should continue to be built out to enhance its value and utility for future policy decisions. A committee member also suggested that we can collect data on the number of hits on the Atlas website to show usability and value. Coakley agreed that the Atlas can support new policies and that the policies can specify how they relate to area-based management and how the work can continue across changes.

For the second recommendation on incorporating new data sets and other relevant baseline information, Stauffer noted that primarily federal data has been included thus far and that there could be opportunities to include other data sets from other, non-federal partners. A Committee member agreed and provided links to other data sets covering eutrophication and hypoxia, as well as microplastic abundance. The member also suggested considering other ocean condition data, change of condition, microplastic distribution, and other data sets to expand the Atlas.

For the third recommendation on improving how we assess management and conservation outcomes, a Committee member began by sharing their thoughts on how they appreciated the focus on efficiency and using indicators as a means to effectively look at conditions. Another Committee member agreed and reiterated that this is even more reason to note the Atlas as a living tool, also making suggestions to change the wording of some phrases to be more direct, for example, from "could be used," to "should be used." Stauffer noted that "standardized" indicators can be challenging given the national geographic scope and many parameters considered. Coakley suggests that indicators should be comparable, representative, and reflective of different areas, and that some indicators may be regionalized. After confirming all discussions and suggestions were taken into consideration, Stauffer thanked everyone who contributed.

Amy Kenney thanked the subcommittee and its leadership for their excellent work. The Committee agreed to an online poll to get a sense of the level of endorsement of members of

the draft recommendations with the edits recommended during the discussion. All 15 FAC members present voted “green” to endorse the recommendations with edits as discussed.

Meaningful Engagement with Communities Subcommittee Presentation and Discussion

Deanna Erickson and Joseph Oatman, Engagement with Communities Subcommittee Chairs

Erickson, subcommittee co-chair, briefly shared background on the subcommittee, including recognition of the subcommittee members and NOAA advisors, the subcommittee work plan and the subcommittee’s current area of focus on co-stewardship and meaningful community engagement. Erickson also acknowledged Oatman, fellow co-chair, for his dedication to the development of the draft recommendations.

Erickson shared that helpful feedback was received from Tribal partners in addition to preliminary review from the entire team in January and February 2025 with a full review of the draft recommendations on meaningful engagement with Tribal and Indigenous communities. She then facilitated discussion of the draft recommendations.

A member noted that language around Tribal and Indigenous engagement should include non-federally recognized Tribes. The member also noted the importance of co-management as the most substantive “gold standard” of partnership with federal agencies, which is why this recommendation is listed first. The member commented that Tribal Nations are distinct from other marginalized groups, and should be discussed separately.

The group discussed potentially shortening some recommendations for consistency, and agreed that the primary author of those sections should have the opportunity to carefully review any proposed changes. Members also noted the differences in capacities of different Tribes and Indigenous organizations.

Erickson explained that the language in this document mirrors the federal government: some that are responsive to specific authorities and some that are responsive to the diversity of contexts across all of the US. Another Committee member suggested that an executive summary could be added for wider utility and accessibility. Other members agreed.

Amy Kenney commended the subcommittee for their recommendations, noting the helpful detail and case studies. After an on-line vote on the draft recommendations, the committee accepted them with the understanding that minor edits would be made and an Executive Summary added.

Committee members discussed next steps in developing further recommendations according to subcommittee workplans. These included additional recommendations on community engagement, and on other types of area-based management, such as “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OCEMs).

Once it was confirmed that there were no other comments or suggestions from this agenda item, Ellie Roberts opened up the meeting for any public comments and thanked those from the public for joining with the Committee for this meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment was shared at this time.

Closing

The Committee Chair and Vice Chair thanked everyone for a great meeting, including the NOAA team. The Chair provided a reminder for the next full Committee meeting, hosted virtually on April 1 - 2, 2025. Final details and agenda are still being developed, and will be shared in the near future. The Chair closed by recognizing that the Committee is in a period of transition. The Committee has a strong and solid work plan, and the subcommittees are advancing their plans. The Committee will consider what we can do as a Committee to ensure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible regarding the Committee's work.

The DFO thanked the Committee for their time and work and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned

"I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete."

- Amy Kenney, Chair, NOAA, Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee, 3/28/2025
- John Armor, Designated Federal Officer, NOAA, Marine and Coastal Area-based Management Advisory Committee, 3/28/2025