



***For Immediate Release***  
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## **President Obama, NOAA Announce Advancement of Proposed Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary Designation in Wisconsin**

The Cities of Port Washington, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Two Rivers jointly announced today that the regional nomination for a National Marine Sanctuary, submitted by Governor Scott Walker on behalf of the citizens of Wisconsin, has been officially selected by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to begin the sanctuary designation process. The selection was announced by President Barack Obama as part of a video message shared during the annual “Our Ocean” global conference being hosted this year in Valparaiso, Chile.

“This represents an extraordinary milestone for all Wisconsinites in our collective effort to bring a National Marine Sanctuary to the central shores of our state,” stated City of Port Washington Mayor Tom Mlada. “We are immensely grateful to our partners at NOAA for advancing our nomination and moving us closer to final designation.”

“Our four communities have worked extremely hard in partnering on this effort and best position us for eventual success, engaging with core staff from the Wisconsin State Historical Society and Wisconsin Coastal Management Program,” said City of Sheboygan Mayor Mike Vandersteen. “Working together, we’ve prepared and submitted a very robust nomination.”

The regional nomination as submitted to NOAA detailed a proposed 875-square mile area National Marine Sanctuary, stretching from Port Washington to Two Rivers. The Sanctuary would be only the second in the Great Lakes and the 14<sup>th</sup> in the United States. It would contain 39 known shipwrecks, including the two oldest shipwrecks in Wisconsin and 15 intact shipwrecks (three with standing masts). Fifteen of the 39 shipwrecks are on the National Register of Historic Places.

“A National Marine Sanctuary in our Mid-Lake Region will be a huge economic boon for our four communities and the region, but more importantly, it will serve as a tremendous source of pride and basis of celebration for our entire State of Wisconsin,” said City of Manitowoc Mayor Justin Nickels.

“We believe a Sanctuary designation is truly fitting,” stated Two Rivers City Manager Greg Buckley. “Our marine environment is enormously rich in historical, cultural, and archaeological treasures, and a National Marine Sanctuary will afford greater opportunity for discovery, protection, and preservation of those unique treasures.”

NOAA will now officially commence with the sanctuary designation process for the proposed area. Designation occurs as a public and participatory process that can take a year or more to complete. The first step is for NOAA to hold public scoping meetings. These meetings will be held on November 17<sup>th</sup> in Manitowoc, November 18<sup>th</sup> in Port Washington, and November 19<sup>th</sup> in Sheboygan.

For more information, please visit the following website: [www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/wisconsin](http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/wisconsin)

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