

## Sanctuary Nomination Process

Summer 2014

For the first time in twenty years, NOAA has re-established a process for the public to nominate nationally significant marine and Great Lakes areas as potential new national marine sanctuaries. This community-based process addresses a growing number of requests for new national marine sanctuaries from diverse interests around the country.

This action will help fulfill NOAA's mandate under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to identify marine areas of special national significance and supports the administration's goals of ensuring healthy coastal communities and economies. The agency received nearly 18,000 comments on the June 2013 proposal, the vast majority of which were in strong support. NOAA is not designating any new national marine sanctuaries with this action, a step towards addressing the growing number of requests for new national marine sanctuaries from a variety of interested constituents from around the country.

### The Next Steps

NOAA's website ([www.nominate.noaa.gov](http://www.nominate.noaa.gov)) describes the nomination process, including the list of criteria and considerations that NOAA will use to evaluate nominations. NOAA expects the review process for each incoming nomination to take approximately three to six months. After each review is complete, successfully nominated sites will be placed in an inventory of areas NOAA could consider for national marine sanctuary designation.

Once an area is placed in the inventory, NOAA may consider beginning the separate multi-year, highly participatory designation process for that area. The national marine sanctuary designation process is described in the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Being in the inventory does not guarantee that NOAA will designate that area as a national marine sanctuary in the future, and it does not establish any regulations or limit activities in the area.

Typically, marine sanctuary designations take three to five years. The designation process depends on a range of factors, including the complexity of the area, the proposed regulations, the level of support from current user groups, and agency resources.

### Anticipated Benefits

Across national marine sanctuaries, NOAA economists estimate about \$6 billion annually is generated in local coastal and ocean-dependent economies from diverse activities like commercial fishing, research, and recreation-tourist activities.



Photo: Ari Friedlaender

Sanctuary designations provide many diverse benefits for coastal communities including the opportunity for the protection of nationally significant marine and cultural resources; social and economic benefits; increased opportunities for management, research, and education; and community engagement.

## Sanctuary Nomination Process

### Questions & Answers

#### **Why is NOAA re-establishing a process to nominate new sites now?**

NOAA is re-establishing the process in response to numerous requests from communities and stakeholders, political leaders, and other interests from across the country. These requests often reference the many and diverse benefits communities realize from a national marine sanctuary. This action also fulfills NOAA's mandate under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to identify marine and Great Lakes areas of special national significance and supports NOAA's goals of ensuring healthy coastal communities and economies.

#### **How do I nominate a new site? What types of information do I need to provide?**

Once the final rule is published in the Federal Register establishing the Sanctuary Nomination Process, it will provide more information on the community-based sanctuary nomination process, including what to include in a nomination. NOAA will also have more information once the rule is published on the Sanctuary Nomination Process website ([www.nominate.noaa.gov](http://www.nominate.noaa.gov)) which will include a guide to help prepare a nomination.

#### **When should I submit a nomination?**

A nomination should be submitted when a community believes that a marine or Great Lakes area meets the national significance criteria and management considerations, and would benefit from becoming a national marine sanctuary.

#### **Is there a nomination deadline?**

There are no deadlines for submissions. Nominations will be reviewed as they are received by NOAA.

#### **How will the nomination process affect uses of the marine environment?**

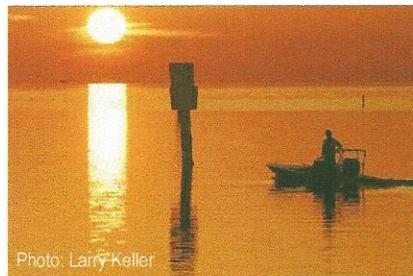
Re-establishing the sanctuary nomination process conveys no direct regulatory protections, nor does it establish any new national marine sanctuaries. NOAA would implement regulations only after a nominated area has gone through the sanctuary designation process, a separate activity that is highly public and participatory and typically takes years to complete.

#### **Where can I find more information about NOAA's sanctuary system?**

More information about NOAA's national marine sanctuary system can be found at: [sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)

#### **Whom do I contact with questions?**

For general questions regarding the sanctuary nomination process, please contact NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: [sanctuary.nominations@noaa.gov](mailto:sanctuary.nominations@noaa.gov)



## A Quick Look at National Marine Sanctuaries



Photo: Claire Fackler, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
Kayaking off Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

### Building Strong Communities through Conservation

For the past 40 years, our national marine sanctuaries have worked to protect special places in America's ocean and Great Lakes waters, from the site of a single Civil War shipwreck to a vast expanse of ocean surrounding remote coral reefs and tiny atolls. Backed by one of the nation's strongest pieces of ocean conservation legislation, national marine sanctuaries seek to preserve the extraordinary scenic beauty, biodiversity, historical connections and economic productivity of our most precious underwater treasures. By acting as responsible stewards of these special places, we strengthen our nation now and for future generations.



Photo: NOAA, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
Big wave surfer off the coast of California's Half Moon Bay

## The National Marine Sanctuary System: *Engaging, Empowering, and Building Strong Communities*

### Who We Are

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), manages the National Marine Sanctuary System, comprised of 13 national marine sanctuaries, and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Its network of 14 marine protected areas is one of the oldest (40+ years) and largest in the world, encompassing more than 170,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington State to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The ONMS also leads the National Marine Protected Areas Center, the nation's hub for building innovative partnerships and tools to protect special ocean places.

### Our Way of Doing Business

**We foster partnerships:** The sanctuary system can't do the job of protecting these special ocean places alone. We maintain, invest in, and benefit from hundreds of partnerships with very different organizations, including with non-governmental organizations,

the academic community, and businesses. We have research collaborations with more than 20 organizations, and sanctuary education efforts reaching more than 6.4 million people.

**We engage communities:** For a sanctuary to be successful, it must have the support and involvement of the communities that border and rely on it. We involve communities in their sanctuaries through a variety of methods, including advisory groups, public meetings, volunteer opportunities, and educational and outreach events.

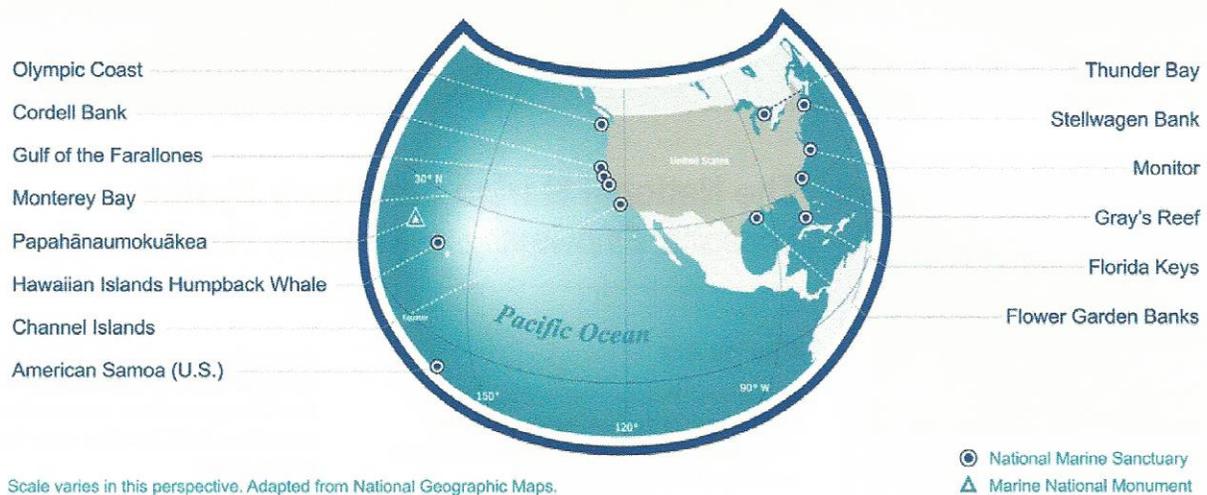
**We empower volunteers:** Volunteers help to ensure sanctuaries remain vibrant for future generations. Through their efforts, volunteers contribute more than 100,000 hours of annual service to the sanctuaries in areas of research, monitoring, enforcement, education and outreach, and management advice. For more information, see [http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/involved/volunteer\\_future.html](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/involved/volunteer_future.html).



Scuba divers explore Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

Photo: NOAA

# NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM



**We innovate:** The ocean is always in motion, and so are we. Sanctuary staff are always on the lookout for how to harness the newest technology and tools in protecting sanctuary resources, for example in developing apps for sanctuary visitors, using unmanned aircraft in oil spill drills and marine species censuses, testing advanced diving technology for our research divers, and pushing the boundaries in the use of international tools to prevent anchoring and vessel grounding damage.

**We see the bigger picture:** Sanctuaries cannot be protected by only working within their boundaries; they are part of the vast, fluid marine environment. We therefore use our sites to project a conservation message and ethic far beyond our boundaries and

engage at every level (locally, regionally, nationally and internationally).

## Our Advisory Councils

National marine sanctuary advisory councils are community-based advisory groups established to provide advice and recommendations to the superintendents of the fourteen sites on issues including management, science, service, and stewardship. More information on advisory councils can be found at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/ac/welcome.html>.

## We empower leading citizens:

The more than 430 members (including alternates) represent a broad cross-section of the communities that lie adjacent to national

marine sanctuaries, and represent such interests as conservation, education, research, fishing, whale watching, diving and other recreational activities, boating and shipping, tourism, harbors and ports, maritime business, agriculture, and maritime heritage, as well as jurisdictional partners from local, regional, state, tribal, territorial and federal agencies.

## We connect American business to

**conservation:** The Sanctuary System Business Advisory Council is the first and so far only group of its kind in NOAA, and perhaps in the federal government. It was created, in short, to provide advice to the sanctuary system on how to better engage the corporate sector in protecting our sites and the ocean at large (<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/management/bac/welcome.html>).



Photo: Steve Sellers, NOAA Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The wheel from the schooner *Cornelia B. Windiate*.



Photo: Claire Fackler, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Youth experience at a past CoastFest event in Port Angeles, Washington.



Photo: Claire Fackler, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Giant trevally along a shallow reef in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

<http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>