

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- March 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: March 15, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: GoToMeetings Virtual Meeting

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Ellen Brody, Pam Orlando, Paul Orlando, Jean Prevo

SAC Members: Eileen Abel, Lee DeCola, Jay Haigler, Dan Hamilton, Bill Kilinski, Nicholas Kuttner, Alan Miller, Maggie Ostdahl, Eric Packard, Joann Roland, Savanna Saunders, John Stefancik, Lucille Walker, Deanna Wheeler

SAC Alternates: George Anas, Paco Blake, Susan Gerbasi, Bonnie Grady, Maureen Hayes, Margo Jackson, Lolita Kiorpes, Sara Ramotnik, Anne Stark, Ruth Toomey, Chad Tokowicz, Bill Utley

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Lisa Guitierrez, Mario Harley, Elizabeth Hughes, Susan Langley, Eileen Minnick, Elizabeth Moore

Guests: Bill Crist, Katie Malinowski, Jaelon Moaney, Ellie Oldach, Carol Shafto

Media: N/A

WELCOME:

Sammy Orlando welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Sammy spoke about the one-on-one meetings and SAC chat which have helped in getting to know the members and will continue. Tonight we are welcoming four new advisory council alternates. He is hopeful with spring around the corner that we will be able to get out in the field and get together in person.

Jean Prevo reviewed the council meeting agenda and introduced the four new alternates:

- Chad Tokowicz – Recreation – Alternate
- Sara Ramotnik – Recreation - Alternate
- Bonnie Grady – Business and Economic Development - Alternate
- Ruth Toomey – Tourism and Marketing - Alternate

Applications are now being accepted for the Maritime Archaeology and History member and the youth member and alternate. The application deadline is April 1, 2021.

The February 1, 2021, meeting minutes were approved by the council. These minutes are available on the website <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/mallows-potomac/involved/meetings.html>.

CHAIRS/VICE-CHAIRS PERSPECTIVES – Carol Shafto, Bill Crist and Katie Malinowski

Before the council starts to accept nominations for the chair and vice-chair positions on the council, Jean and Sammy thought it was important for the council to hear from others in the sanctuary program that have experience in these positions.

Jean introduced the first speaker Carol Shafto from the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. Carol Shafto is the former chair of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. She has been a member of the council since its inception in 1997, first representing the City of Alpena and now as a citizen-at-large representative. Carol is the former Mayor of Alpena and is also retired from the Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency where she was the planning and evaluation director.

Carol started off by speaking about some of the chair roles and responsibilities:

- Chair serves as an advisor to the superintendent and to the sanctuary itself.
- Chair is not in charge of anything except the meeting. This is an advisory body and formed as an advisory body. Things can get complicated at times. When talking in a public setting you have to be speaking as a body... not an individual.
- Main responsibilities are to attend meetings, serve as intervener, and accept any assignments that come your way, i.e., serve on a committee.
- Chair should volunteer not only to help recruit other volunteers but serve as a role model. Important to establish rapport with other council members, helps to form relationships that are beneficial and the Chair can foster that especially when new members come on.
- Important the Chair attend the functions of the sanctuary. May not have those yet but when there's an event or fundraiser or volunteer night it's important to present.
- Be on hand to greet dignitaries, say hello and be on a meeting if asked to be.
- Attend annual National Chair Council meetings representing your sanctuary as one of the 15 NMS around the system (outside of COVID).

Then Carol touched on traits that she believes are important in a chair:

- Respect between the superintendent, staff, chair and members. Need to have a variety of opinions but respect is important.
- Trustworthy.
- Dependability. Always show up.
- Credibility and honesty. You will be representing opinions that are controversial. You need to be honest and credible.

- Informed about the sanctuary and mission. You will be stopped locally. You never know when you will be asked a question on something that's going on. It would be nice if you knew but if you don't you need to be honest and say you'll get back to them when you do have the requested information.
- Be available to do what you're called upon do. For example, Carol was selected along with 10 members to testify in Congress on reauthorization of the Marine Sanctuaries Act.
- Be open and honest, warm, friendly all those things that may make someone put you in that position.
- Embrace and enjoy. It has been an honor of her career and she's had a long and varied career to serve on this board for 24-years, including being the chair for 3-years before the sanctuary was designated.

Carol said to please call her if you would like to discuss more privately.

Jean introduced the current chair and vice-chair from the Proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. Bill Crist is the current chair of the council. He is the Superintendent of Schools with the Diocese of Syracuse and holds the education seat on the council. Vice-chair Katie Malinowski is the executive director of the New York State Tug Hill Commission. She represents the citizen-at-large seat on the council. They were asked to discuss what made them raise their hand to be chair and vice-chair.

Bill said it was interesting stepping into this seat. There were three areas he considered when making the decision to put his name forward for chair:

1. He's lived around the lake since he was 12-years old. Passion has been burning in him for doing more on what exists a few miles from his home.
2. The other part that jumped out at him was the desire and ambition to make things happen. When it was announced as a proposal to bring a National Marine Sanctuary to the eastern Lake Ontario region in and around Oswego and Jefferson Counties, it was a dream come true. "How can I make that happen?"
3. Bill has always had a commitment to service, brought up by parents to give service and to give back. What that looked like to him and once the group of incredible people was assembled, it was exciting.

For him it was a natural progression in being chair or vice-chair. He looks at the qualities of the people who are serving on the advisory council now and each time they meet and said that serving as chair is very humbling.

Katie Malinowski is a lifelong resident of upstate New York. She felt it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to do something really big in New York. She has a back ground in natural resources so it fit well with her outlook and personal interests. Her kids are getting older so she now has the time to devote to the mission of the advisory council. It was exciting to think about being part of something this big.

Katie did take the opportunity to speak to Carol Shafto directly for advice before she made her decision on putting her hat in the ring for vice-chair. Carol shared with her many of the things that she shared tonight and Katie has found them all to be true and very helpful.

Their council was established 8 months ago and COVID has prevented them from meeting in person, but she is looking forward to the day when they can.

As chair and vice-chair, she and Bill have weekly meetings with their council coordinator Pam Orlando and Ellen Brody, who is the lead on the Lake Ontario designation. Those meetings are important so they can stay informed and helps them learn what needs to be done to assist Ellen and Pam. They are the council's connections to NOAA.

Katie said that the chair, vice-chair and entire council really are NOAA's connection to the local community. Helpful trait for the chair or vice-chair is being connected to the community and not being shy to pick up the phone to figure something out.

Questions for Carol, Bill, Katie:

Lee DeCola to Carol: What does conflict mean?

Carol: We had a pro-sanctuary and an anti-sanctuary camp. Served as arbitrator between the two. Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is in Lake Huron. A lot of concern around if NOAA came would fishing rights be impinged upon, would riparian rights be violated? I was more in a role to be neutral because I can't come in with a pro or con position. As a chair I was able to look at it from that perspective.

Alan Miller: What is the most challenging part of coordination?

Bill: Biggest challenge so far is never meeting in person. Everyone on this call has worked in some community forum or group before. No one was fully comfortable with what that mode of communication would look like. How do we propel ourselves? We can't wait to have our first family (SAC) reunion when we can come together. The other part – we haven't always agreed as a SAC. We have had spirited debates during the meeting, before and after the meeting via phone calls or whatever. We are the local representatives and we recognize that and then we pass it off to Ellen, Pam and Joe to work out solutions.

Katie: We have so many people from different walks of life on our council. Some of us are experts in diving or shipwrecks and you have to try to understand it all and learn from each other. Virtual is not the best but we are making it work.

Carol: It has been very interesting to listen to Bill and Katie. Initially when Thunder Bay was proposed 2/3 of people voted no, no sanctuary. During those times it was very challenging. That's when credibility, honesty came to the forefront. There have been more recent things in expanding the boundaries, still pros and cons, some members wanted it, some didn't, some members on our SAC lobbied against nomination. Most important thing a chair can do is respectfully listen and allow opinions to come forward. More recent issue was whether people were going to be welcoming to the other Great Lake sanctuaries like Wisconsin and New York. People wanted to keep it that way. They didn't want new sanctuaries coming in. We have had our wars but the last few years have been rather boring. Once the sanctuary was designated it is now perceived as the salvation of this part of Michigan.

Eileen Abel: I wanted to talk a little bit about even if you have an opinion you speak with one unified voice. How do you talk about coming together as it relates to advocacy, trust level, respect? What are the tips early on?

Katie: Listening to people. Trying not to walk into the meeting knowing all the answers. Check opinions at the door. My background is very grass roots oriented. Listen to people and develop solutions. Natural inclination. Transferred well to the council work. We have had a few difficult conversations with some of our council members.

Bill: Ditto what Katie said. Greatest thing to do is to listen and where the position is coming from. Before you even come into the meeting and circumnavigating the situation, be open-minded.

Carol: Sometimes might help to meet with that person individually. They may be able to express themselves better one-on-one to help resolve issues. What I found is that the issues all came from the same root. People who were for it or against it – it was from love. We have same goal in mind to protect this asset and we are going about it from different ways. We have way more in common than what divides us.

Carol, Bill and Katie are all willing to answer any other questions from interested council members. Jean will send an email with their contact information. Feel free to reach out to them.

Sammy thanked Carol, Bill and Katie. Carol is the voice of experience. Thunder Bay really is our model home, engaging community in terms of size, nature and what Alpena represents. Lake Ontario is in a similar place as Mallows although they are ahead of us by several advisory council meetings, we are both going through the same motions of spinning up an advisory council, community engagement and advocacy. There is a lot of shared interest being in the same place at the same time. Bill and Katie spend a lot of time in between meetings talking with Ellen and Pam, which helps build the trust. There is no shortcut in doing these things. We cannot thank them enough for being here tonight!

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR SELF-NOMINATION FORM AND TIMELINE:

Jean reviewed the Google form that will be used to collect chair and vice-chair nominations. The council members were instructed to fill out the form and submit it if they are interested in self-nominating. If they would like to nominate someone else, the council was instructed to please have a conversation with that person first. We are looking for forms from people that are seriously considering one or both of these positions. The deadline for the submitting the form is **April 19, 2021**. If you have questions, please reach out to Jean or Sammy.

MEETING SCHEDULE AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

Jean shared the full schedule of 2021 council meeting dates. Please plan on these meetings being held virtually until further notice. All regular meetings are from 6:00pm-8:00pm eastern time.

2021 Meeting Dates:

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| Monday, May 3, 2021 | Monday, September 13, 2021 |
| Monday, June 14, 2021 | Monday, October 25, 2021 |
| Monday, July 26, 2021 | Monday, December 6, 2021 |

SAC Chat Dates:

- Monday, April 12 – 7:00pm-8:00pm
- Wednesday, April 14 – 12:00pm-1:00pm

SANCTUARY CO-MANAGEMENT:

As Jean and Sammy continued meeting with members one-on-one and during SAC chats, they learned that there is still more that everyone wants to learn about the sanctuary and its management. There have been questions about the co-management team. This is only the third council meeting so we need to continue getting everyone up to speed.

The Mollows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary’s 18-square mile boundary is entirely in state of Maryland waters. The sanctuary is co-managed with Charles County, Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and NOAA. All of these partners are signatories on a memorandum of agreement for joint management of the sanctuary. This is still a federal designation but this federal designation is shared and operated jointly with both the state of Maryland and with Charles County.

Sammy introduced the representatives at the meeting from the three organizations. Eileen Minnick from Charles County, Susan Langley with the Maryland Historical Trust and Lisa Gutierrez interim representative from the Maryland DNR.

Charles County Maryland – Eileen Minnick, Director of Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism.

Eileen gave a snapshot of her department's responsibilities. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism administers and coordinates all recreational and tourism programs, activities and special events, as well as park system planning, design, development and maintenance.

Recreation Division:

- Provides recreational and leisure time experiences for Charles County residents of all ages.

Parks and Grounds Division:

- Provides residents with diverse and wholesome outdoor recreation opportunities where they can safely recreate, enjoy nature, become more physically fit, and connect with neighbors, friends, and pets.

Tourism Division:

- Promotes and develops activities and attractions that bring overnight visitors to create a positive economic impact by generating tourism industry sales and tax dollars and hospitality jobs.

There are 63 full-time and 199 part-time staff. The number of part-time staff fluctuates seasonally.

Eileen spoke about the recreation and other activities offered. They have a great partnership with the board of education so many of their community centers are within schools and offer a wide variety of activities for school children, but they also have strong recreational programs for all ages.

The Parks and Grounds Division has approximately 30 staff members that preserve, manage and maintain over 4,000 acres of county parkland on 33 developed and undeveloped locations throughout the county. The park system is very diverse containing natural and historic resources. Able to offer diverse programming, as well as active and passive outdoor opportunities for county residents. The grounds staff is also responsible for 30 county facilities, which are not necessarily parks, landscaping and snow and ice removal. They also maintain 84 board of education athletic fields (78 acres at 29 school locations.)

Receives some funding from the Department of Natural Resources and other grants to assist. The division's main focus is preserving and protecting the environmental resources.

Eileen shared an informational slide that showed an overview of some of their park locations and activities.

The Tourism Division promotes, markets and supports any of the tourism events and any of the activities and historic properties. They also focus on local businesses. During COVID they have worked with businesses to help market to local residents, instead of just focusing on bringing visitors from outside of the area.

For example, Patuxent Brewing Company, a local brewery, recently named a beer *Sunkin Sips* in honor of Mallows Bay. It was featured at the state of Maryland's *Febrewary* event. The County is also working with some wineries that are hoping to open in the near future, as well as a distillery.

Very strong in history in Charles County. Have numerous partnerships with many of our historic sites and various small profit organizations. Looking forward to hosting some events at these outdoor locations when the COVID restrictions lift in the spring.

Tourism Satellite Locations:

Port Tobacco Historic Village

Hosts more than 10,000 visitors yearly.

Partnership with Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco.

Crain Memorial Welcome Center

Serves more than 80,000 visitors yearly.

Travel counselors help visitors develop custom itineraries, learn about local events, get directions to their next stop, or reserve lodging.

Mallows Bay Park is known as the premier park and is part of the Mallows Bay-Potomac National Marine Sanctuary. The property is owned by the state of Maryland DNR. The park is approximately 189 acres. The county has a 25-year lease with the DNR (2006-2031). The county provides maintenance and operations to assist the DNR. Partnerships are vital for the county and work extremely well because they all have the same goals.

Mallows Bay Park has a site plan in place which was approved by the DNR in 2006/2007. There are some restrictions within that site plan for future enhancements so the county is working on submitting some proposals on some improvements or enhancements they feel are needed at the park. Hope to get them through DNR and Maryland Historic Trust for approvals. The county doesn't want to change much in Mallows Park, 100% on board to preserve and protect the park land. There are currently more boaters and kayakers utilizing the waterway, so looking to see if it is at all possible to move the kayak launch to another area to help with the flow of the current boat ramp.

Would also love very much to have an outdoor classroom for school fieldtrips. Keeping the updates very minimal to keep the park preserved and protected and to respect the community of Nanjemoy as well. Nanjemoy is very rural which adds to the beauty of the park.

She gave an overview of the boundaries of the Mallows Bay Park. There are some limitations of what can be done as far as boardwalks and other access to the ships at Mallows Bay due to some privately owned land near the park.

The park is great for hiking and fishing.

Eileen shared the Mallows Bay Park monthly visitors' log. Numbers have continued to increase from 14,000 in 2018 to 25,402 in 2020. The park is open dawn to dusk 365 days a year.

The county is extremely proud of the park and employs two part-time staff at the park to help with traffic at the boat ramp and provide information. They provide maintenance and work to keep the park safe and clean. Local budgets currently don't have the funds to provide full-time staff.

Eileen closed her presentation by saying they are extremely proud to work with NOAA, Maryland DNR and Maryland Historic Trust, a great team working toward common goals.

Sammy made a point that Mallows really is the gateway to the sanctuary and enhancing the visitor experience. Eileen's team does an awful lot. That county park has a history of its own going all the way back to the Piscataway peoples. We are working to better understand and interpret those histories on that part of the water. At the same time the county is also the gateway to the communities. Not everything needs to happen at the park, a lot of it can happen in the county in and around the Chesapeake Bay region on both sides of the river. We are very excited about the potential we have with the county.

Maryland Historical Trust/State Historic Preservation Office - Maryland Department of Planning – Susan Langley, State Underwater Archaeologist

Mallows Bay NMS shipwreck collection is unique in the world and is the largest homogeneous shipwreck collection in the world. The sanctuary boundaries match the historic district boundaries on the National Register.

As a state agency, they manage all the heritage resources in state waters but one of the main things they do is compliance so they also have a specific compliance office. Any action being undertaken in state waters requires them to evaluate the proposal to see if it meets federal and state laws.

Within state waters as a whole they do have ongoing research. Part of the mission is to find, evaluate and document all heritage items within state waters. Ongoing research using side scan sonar, magnetometer and ROVs. Much of the work is done by working with non-profits and other partners to survey state waters.

Susan touched on some various research projects that are going on throughout the sanctuary region.

They have been working on documenting the shipwrecks to help with developing condition reports, and storytelling to promote and maintain their heritage.

Also look at Maritime Cultural landscapes which is a holistic view of the region. There aren't any lighthouses there but there is a marine railway and other activities. Archaeology is also anthropology. Have to look at maritime heritage and cultural landscape holistically. In this area there are many historic fisheries. Fisheries continue to play an important role in Mallow's Bay and the Potomac River.

Maryland has been in the forefront of climate change action planning for a long time. Worked with other partners on the Climate Change Impact Profile for Mallow's Bay-Potomac River NMS. Planning proactively with all of the agencies. Working to identify resources and develop an inventory of potentially impacted infrastructure from climate change, including sea-level rise, worsening coastal storms and worsening coastal erosion.

They often bring in volunteers to help pickup marine debris along the river. One of Susan's challenges is developing a training plan to help volunteers tell the difference between marine debris and shipwreck artifacts.

Worked with partners to develop a map of Mallow's Bay for paddling and hiking. Also helped develop a full story map.

Full Story Map:

<http://chescon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=9b7f368b9b5d460c937d90dd107bd1df>

Paddling Itinerary Suggestions and Additional Information:

<http://arcg.is/2efgan3>

Work with the education system visiting the Ocean Guardian Schools, they are tremendous partners.

Working with many other partners in the county on protecting visitors and resources. Don't want visitors to get injured while visiting the park.

Susan spoke about some of the universities and field schools they are partnering with on other scientific research in the bay (University of Maryland, East Carolina University.)

The MHT is also working on trying to capture oral histories.

Working with NOAA and the DNR to put a hydrophone out for a few months to get living acoustics of the wrecks.

Sammy spoke about the MHT being tremendous partners. They are the custodians of the ghost fleet but also so much more. The history, heritage and culture of these surrounding lands goes back so much further than the ghost fleet. Looking forward to learning more about these areas. The more visitors learn, the more they become stewards of the area.

Sammy asked Lisa Guterrez of the Maryland DNR to briefly introduce herself. Lisa is with the Chesapeake and coastal watershed service of the DNR. Their department deals with a number of different issues, including recreation and water access which is her specialty. Their department is in a transition so we will hear from the DNR at a later date.

This sanctuary is a complex overlay of many, many different groups. Heard from two of those groups today and we will continue to hear from these partners at future council meetings – the tribes, Department of Navy, Coast Guard and the State of Virginia.

We are all here for a particular common reason and the opportunities that these afford to local communities and to visitors. The more we hear about it, the more we know about it and the more synergies can work off of each other.

LOOKING AHEAD – Sammy Orlando

Next meeting will focus on chair and vice-chair elections, hearing from those folks interested in holding those positions. Also hearing from other partners to learn more about the site and its partnerships. We will start to transition these meetings into more of the programming and thematic areas that align with the site and management plan. These synergies will come together at that point and time. The first few meetings have to be more informational in order to move forward.

Please continue to reach out to Jean and Sammy in between formal meetings with questions, comments or program ideas.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ellie Oldach – She is from Maryland and is a grad student out in California studying environmental governments. Very excited about the Mallows Bay sanctuary and it's been very cool to sit in on SAC meetings and see how all of the decision making happens. Thank you all.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm. The next regular meeting is **Monday, May 3, 2021 at 6:00pm.**