

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary  
Advisory Council  
- May 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**

**Date: May 3, 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, Alan Miller, Maggie Ostdahl, Joanne Roland, Taylor Schmitz, John Stefancik, Deanna Wheeler

**SAC Alternates:** Paco Blake, Susan Gerbasi, Bonnie Grady, Maureen Hayes, Margo Jackson, Lolita Kiorpes, Sara Ramotnik, Savanna Saunders, Anne Stark, Chad Tokowicz, Ruth Toomey, William Utley

**Government Agency and Tribe Members:** Paul Anderson, Mario Harley, Susan Langley, Eileen Minnick, Elizabeth Moore

**Guests:** Brendan Burke, Ellie Oldach

**Media:** N/A

**WELCOME:**

Jean Prevo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**SAC BUSINESS:**

Applications are now being accepted for the Maritime Archaeology and History member and the youth member and alternate. The application deadline is May 31, 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>.

**Upcoming Events -**

SAC Chats

Wednesday, May 19 at 12pm and 7pm

SAC Meetings

Monday, June 21 at 6pm

Monday, July 26 at 6pm

Monday, September 13 at 6pm

Capitol Hill Oceans Week – June 8-10<sup>th</sup> - Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW), hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, gathers people together from across the U.S. and around the world to engage in a dialogue on how to sustain the health of our ocean and Great Lakes. This year, on June 8-10th, the conference will focus on building a more racially equitable and just movement for ocean and Great Lakes conservation. CHOW is open to the public and free to attendees. For more information or to register to attend visit <https://marinesanctuary.org/capitol-hill-ocean-week-2021/>.

### **Chair & Vice-Chair Nominee Statements and Voting Procedures –**

The chair will work with sanctuary staff to set agendas, preside over meetings, sign correspondence and represent the SAC. The vice-chair will serve in the absence of the chair and assist in the executive duties of the council. The term of appointment for each seat is two years, with a maximum of two consecutive years if re-elected.

At the last meeting SAC members were given instructions on how to self-nominate (if interested) or nominate others. There were four members interested in being chair and/or vice-chair. They are:

Eileen Abel - Education

Dan Hamilton – Business and Economic Development

Alan Miller – Business and Economic Development

Deanna Wheeler – Citizen-at-Large

Prior to the meeting the candidates submitted written statements outlining why they wanted to be in a leadership role, their skills and expertise and their vision for the council. These statements were provided to the council members and alternates before the meeting. During the meeting the candidates were each given 10 minutes to share more about themselves and their backgrounds.

After the meeting the 15 advisory council members will receive a digital ballot. The voting will be conducted using a two-step process first for the chair and then for the vice-chair. The ballots for chair will be due on Friday, May 7. Once the votes have been counted and the chair is confirmed we will make that announcement and then send out the ballot to vote for the vice-chair. The turn-around for that will be 2-3 days.

Sammy and Jean encouraged primary members to have discussions with the alternate members before voting. They also encouraged everyone to reach out to the candidates directly with questions.

### **SANCTUARY MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

Sammy shared the thoughts we have been hearing during the SAC chats and one-on-one calls with members and alternates. He blended where we are going as a sanctuary with the interests coming from those conversations. He asked the council to listen during his presentation to see if

there is someplace you see yourself, something you want to participate in going forward. After we have a chair and vice-chair a few meetings later, we will be developing a sanctuary advisory council work plan. The work plan will be developed using the Sanctuary Management Plan and the council's ideas and recommendations.

Partnership with Community –

Maritime and Cultural Heritage – Ghost Fleet gets all of the attention it played an important role in our history but at the same time it is only one piece of the culture and heritage of this area.

Recreation and Tourism – What do we do to actually enhance the visitor experience once they are there? How do we get them coming back?

Sammy reviewed the five action plans found in the Mallows Bay NMS's management plan which can be found on the website at <https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/docs/2019-mallows-bay-potomac-river-nms-designation-feis-fmp.pdf>.

Action Plans:

- Resource Protection
- Recreation and Tourism
- Education
- Research, Science and Technology
- Sanctuary Operations and Administration

Sammy spoke about the four pillars translating sanctuary management for opportunity:

1. Recreation, tourism and enhancing the visitor experience
2. Bringing the sanctuary to the people
3. Supporting community and quality of life
4. Gateway to Sanctuary system, NOAA and community partnerships

**Pillar 1: Recreation, tourism and enhancing the visitor experience.**

Eileen Minnick spoke a little about this at the last meeting. Visitation has doubled in the last three years. People want to get out on the water and learn about the ghost fleet. Sammy's experience tells him that people are fascinated with not only the ghost fleet but also what is happening on the other side of the river at Quantico, with the osprey, the stories of the Piscataway Conoy and the native culture and homelands, of Wilsons farm, commercial fishing, etc.

Sammy gave an overview of some of the interpretive materials already being used by Mallows:

Water Trail Map – Free laminated paddle map that shows the 16 shipwreck marker buoys in the water. The map is static so eventually would like to develop a more interactive app or story map that could bring in the culture and history to present those in different ways.

Water Quality Buoy – In partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and the DNR, the sanctuary installed a water quality buoy that provides real-time data. Working with Maryland DNR to install a weather station this year, which will provide real-time weather updates.

Safety:

Water Quality Monitoring – Working with the Potomac River Keeper to monitor the water quality and get out information to the public.

USCG Paddling Resources – The US Coast Guard has an “If Found – Contact” sticker available to put on your vessel. They have also have an app that allows paddlers and boaters to file a float plan along with these other features:

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Latest safety regulations     | Find the nearest NOAA buoy |
| Request a vessel safety check | Report a hazard            |
| Check your safety equipment   | Report pollution           |
| Navigation rules              | Report suspicious activity |
| Request emergency assistance  |                            |

Walking Trails and Community Service – The Maryland DNR have developed a walking trail map. There are apps like iNaturalist for people that are interested in citizen science and recording data.

Cultural Engagement – Partnering with the Potomac River Keeper for Riverpaloosa in June to do a paddle tour that is run in cooperation with the Piscataway Conoy Tribe and focused on their heritage.

Infrastructure Requirements Study – A study was conducted and signage was a big topic. Looking to put up some direction and informational signage, including Piscataway Conoy trail markers to bring awareness to their heritage. Looking for ways to enhance and broaden the visitor experience at the park.

**Pillar 2: Bringing the sanctuary to the people.**

Story Maps - Many of the council members have spoken to us about story maps. Story maps provide a more dynamic way to interpret than a static map. Sammy envisions developing story maps to interpret maritime landscapes. He also would like to see a story map dedicated to the tribes speaking to their history, culture and heritage told in their own words. The options for these story maps are endless (i.e. Wilson Farm, commercial fishing and history of the Department of Defense.)

Virtual Paddles – A virtual paddle of Malloys Bay was developed with the Chesapeake Conservancy in 2015. Sammy would like to get a new video during a lower water level to see more of the wrecks and include information about the cultural landscapes. The virtual paddle could be used in kiosks, visitor centers, fairs and tradeshow to give people an opportunity to take this virtual paddle.

Virtual Experience – East Carolina University is working on developing a 3D virtual model that shows what the ghost fleet might have looked like before they were burned to the waterline.

Bringing the sanctuary to the people means you don't have to do everything at the sanctuary. There are places all over the Chesapeake Bay region that are already doing things that we want to be doing. Malloys Bay NMS wants to join other partners that are already doing programs. For example, safety schools, teaching people to drive boats and engagement opportunities just to name a few. People want to make the connection from their places to our place because it serves multiple benefits for both communities.

### **Pillar 3: Supporting community and quality of life.**

Education – Ocean Guardian has been a flagship for us for the past seven years. SAC members Lolita Kiorpes and Deanna Wheeler have been carrying this for us with great success. Excited that it gives us a way to get the students out onto the water and learning more about the area. Sometimes it's about boats and sometimes it's about a new learning opportunity.

Reaching Underserved Communities – Continue to partner with Diving with a Purpose, National Association of Black Scuba Divers and Charles County Public School System. Getting students into the water, exposing them to both culture and technology, as well as career and academic opportunities that they maybe never had access to.

Advanced Technologies and Career Opportunities – Work already going on between the Navy, College of Southern Maryland and Charles County through the CSM Velocity Center. There is work going on all over southern Maryland including at the University of Maryland system with autonomous aircraft. This program is super high on the sanctuary's priority list. We want to know how best we can engage with folks that are already doing these things. There is no downside to helping support advanced education, vocational training and marine trades and to be able to use places like the University of Maryland exactly for these purposes.

Local Business and Economic Opportunity – Small business opportunities waiting to happen everywhere. This isn't going to be National Harbor, this is going to stay Nanjemoy, but there are opportunities for small businesses like Atlantic Kayak. Sammy shared a few other small businesses that have opened and tied into the sanctuary like the Alamo Draffhouse Cinema where they named the bar the *Ghost Fleet* and *Sunkin Sips* which is a new Patuxent Brewery beer that was released in February. Economic opportunity is a big part of what we are hoping the sanctuary can facilitate.

Ecotourism and Heritage Tours – Many people on the council have mentioned small ecotourism and heritage tour business opportunities on the Potomac. There are a lot of people interested in these types of trips.

**Pillar 4: Gateway to Sanctuary system, NOAA and community partnerships.**

Showcasing Federal, State, County and Community Partnerships – Being so close to Washington, DC has its advantages. This coming year is going to be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of most of the major environmental legislation of this country, including the National Marine Sanctuary System. Being close to DC makes Mallows Bay NMS a gateway to show off all types of different partnerships, community needs and community benefits.

Funding can come in from other places beyond NOAA. Creating the partnerships and finding funds will take all of us on the council and our partners. Being close to DC gives us an advantage. Sammy encouraged everyone to think about how we can use Mallows Bay to show off our needs, as well as our capacities and abilities in a way that will benefit all of the communities we are representing.

Sammy plans to continue these conversations with all of the council members and put together small teams to start working on these ideas.

**Discussion:**

Dan Hamilton had a suggestion in the chat box - Install chronolog. During the last chat we spoke about this idea. Dan did some canoeing in Blackwater and found a camera he didn't know was there. He took a photograph of the sign and got some information. It's a cool idea. You set your camera on a post and rotate it through eight positions and take a picture, then upload the pictures to a website and it creates a time-lapse from all of these different viewpoints that are the same. A remarkable way to get a view of a watershed.

Lee DeCola asked for a link to the Mallows Bay NMS Management Plan in the chat box.

<https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/docs/2019-mallows-bay-potomac-river-nms-designation-feis-fmp.pdf>

John Stefancik question in the chat box - One question about content on the NOAA Mallows Bay website. It appears to be standardized? Are we able to collaborate on the content we show to the public? Sammy – It is standard. We have to follow certain best practices. We are in the process of adding more content to our site and establishing a Facebook page.

Deanna Wheeler - What is happening to the Friends of Mallows Bay? Sammy – It is still informal at this stage of the game. We do have a national foundation that works at a national level. Many sanctuaries have their own chapter connected to the national foundation and some

have a separate stand-alone group. We are working on what option might be best for Mallows because we want it to be locally driven.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ellie Oldach - Thank you all! No comments here, just grateful to keep hearing about the SAC and your plans for Mallows Bay.

**ADJOURN:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm. The next regular meeting is **Monday, June 21, 2021 at 6:00pm.**