

**Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
-May 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: May 18, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Ansay Building, 101 E. Grand Avenue, Port Washington, Wisconsin

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Russ Green, Jean Prevo, Caitlin Zant

SAC Members: Brendon Baillod, Joshua Bastianello, John Broihahn, Roland Chaloupka, Melissa Gutierrez, Scott Huebner, John Janssen, Jeffrey Lamont, Richard Larsen, Tom Mlada, Bill Moren, Patrick Neu, Dawn St. George

SAC Alternates: David Bennett, Kevin Cullen, James Falkowski, Letitia Hase, Jason Prigge, Vanessa VanderWeele, Mike Vandersteen, John Wyrostek

Government Agency and Tribe Members: Greg Buckley – City of Two Rivers, Josh Fennell – U.S. Coast Guard, Paul Hacker – Manitowoc County, Andrew Struck – Ozaukee County

Guests: Doug Hamilton, Barb Joose, Ian McCain, Rich Thompson, Mike Friis

Media: None

WELCOME AND MEETING OVERVIEW:

Russ Green, Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent, called the meeting to order.

Ian McCain with Ansay Development welcomed the council to Port Washington. Ansay has been a supporter of the sanctuary and would love to help and partner in any way they can. Tom Mlada thanked Ansay for being a great community partner and providing meeting space to the council.

Introductions were made for members that were unable to attend the first meeting and the new government members that have joined since March.

The council approved the minutes from March 16, 2023 meeting.

Recruitment closed on April 30 for the following alternate positions:

- Diving/Dive Clubs/Archaeology
- Education (higher education)
- Education (K-12)
- History/Heritage/Public Interpretation
- Fishing
- Recreation

Only one application has been received so we are extending the deadline through the end of the month. Please help spread the word in your networks.

At the last meeting there was a question about social media/media. Jean shared the following excerpt from the SAC handbook pertaining to this issue.

3. Between Advisory Councils and the Media

One or more members or alternates may communicate with the media on behalf of the advisory council on matters that pertain to advisory council agenda items, but only if the member(s) or alternate(s) have received consent from the full advisory council and approval from the superintendent at an advisory council meeting to be the media contact(s). Further, before relaying information to the media, the advisory council must draft (and approve) either talking points, a position paper, or some other guidance that articulates the advisory council's position on the specific topic to be discussed. The required disclaimer must be included in any communication between the advisory council and media.

The advisory council must provide the superintendent and the local advisory council coordinator with a copy of the finalized media comments, and the superintendent must approve it before the selected media contact(s) may engage with the media. When communicating with the media, the advisory council media contact(s) should follow the approved comments closely to ensure that the information relayed is consistent and accurate.

Advisory councils and their members and alternates are not authorized to discuss issues with the media that do not pertain to the sanctuary. For example, they may not comment on broader NOAA or DOC issues. Instead, advisory councils should refer any such comments to ONMS staff for an appropriate response.

As always, advisory council members and alternates acting as [private individuals](#) may speak to the media about any topic.

Feel free to reach out to Russ or Jean if you have questions on this matter

THUNDER BAY NMS ADVISORY COUNCIL – Al Moe:

Al Moe is the fishing alternate on the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS) Advisory Council and is also a Friends of TBNMS (Friends) Board member. Al spoke about the background of TBNMS and his role.

Al retired as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Alpena Regional Medical and was part of the team that worked with NOAA, TBNMS and the sanctuary advisory council to bring a hyperbaric chamber to the local hospital. The council felt this was an important priority not only for treating diving accidents, but for treating various medical issues for the local community.

Al is an active member of the Friends board. The Friends group is a non-profit 501c3 which works to bring in funds to support the mission of the sanctuary, with a large focus on education and outreach programs. The board consists of five board members, one of them being the sanctuary superintendent.

This past year they were able to obtain a grant that brings ever third grade student in the Alpena area to the sanctuary's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center four times during the school year. They work with sanctuary staff to learn about the sanctuary, ROVs and natural resources in the sanctuary. Then, during their final visit they have the opportunity to tour the sanctuary aboard the glass bottom boat *Lady Michigan*, which is run by the Friends, to see the shipwrecks.

The Friends are able to seek out funding and do programs that go beyond what NOAA and the sanctuary can fund. The Friends funding helps pay for the staff that operate the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, the sanctuary store and the glass bottom boat *Lady Michigan*.

TBNMS's advisory council was formed in 1997 prior to the sanctuary being designated. There was some negativity and push back from the community. The council was able to work with their constituencies and NOAA to help get Thunder Bay designated as a sanctuary in 2000. The original boundary was 448 square miles but in 2014 the sanctuary was able to expand to 4,300 square miles.

TBNMS's advisory council has been instrumental in the economic and tourism development of the area. The council assists the staff in hosting an annual student ROV competition, the Thunder Bay Maritime Festival, a large Halloween event and many other education and outreach programs throughout the year.

Al spoke about the importance of both members and alternates attending the council meetings, it helps the group be more effective.

Questions:

You mentioned that during the designation process there was a low public opinion. How has that changed and how did the council work to alleviate some of those concerns?

Public opinion has changed dramatically. One of the first things the council worked on with sanctuary staff was the mooring buoy program. The mooring buoys not only provide protection to the wrecks but they help promote safe, public recreation. This really helped get the fishermen and divers on board.

Another thing that helped change the public opinion was the sanctuary's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center and the visitor experience it provides to the community and tourists. Having this facility has made an economic impact on the community. Prior to COVID the visitor center had close to 100,000 visitors annually. The visitor center allows folks to learn about the sanctuary's rich maritime history and the sanctuary's research and education programs. Viking Cruises have added a Great Lakes route with a stop in Alpena which has helped with economic growth and also educating the public. The council helps by volunteering for outreach and education programs that bring in more folks to the area.

There has been lots of research in the sanctuary which brings in explorers from around the world. When a new wreck is found it creates excitement and brings notoriety to the community.

Can you discuss what role, if any, the advisory council and/or the Friends group play in the annual Film Festival?

The sanctuary hosts the Annual International Film Festival in January at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center. The Friends supports this event through fundraising and ticket sales. Great volunteer group that has been developed out of the Friends and council members themselves. It was suggested that the Film Festival could be a good partner opportunity for the Wisconsin and Thunder Bay. Thunder Bay is excited to have another sanctuary in the Great Lakes and would love to work on joint projects like this together.

There are only five board members, how come just five and not seven or nine?

It has worked well for us to have a smaller group, but there has been discussion about potentially adding a few more members. Al encouraged the council members to get the local Downtown Development Associations and Convention and Visitor's Bureaus involved, along with local government agencies. It is critical to have their support.

There are different ways to have a Friends group. One is partnering with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and creating a chapter. The other is having a separate entity. Thunder Bay tried both options but found that creating a separate, local Friends' group, not a chapter of the national foundation, worked best in our community.

On behalf of the TBNMS staff and advisory council, Al invited everyone to come to Alpena to visit TBNMS and the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center.

Al would be happy to talk to any of you if you have further questions or ideas. He can be reached via email at ajcmoe@charter.net or by phone at 989-590-3459.

CHAIR/VICE CHAIR INFO & NOMINATIONS:

Nominations for a chair and vice-chair were accepted both during the meeting and prior to the meeting via email. These positions will serve a two-year term. During the call for nominations, both Tom Mlada and Scott Huebner were nominated. They both accepted the nominations, with Tom Mlada offering to take the vice-chair position. A motion was made and the council voted unanimously to elect Scott Huebner to chair and Tom Mlada as vice-chair.

VOICE MAP COLLABORATION WITH WSCNMS – Dawn St. George

Council member Dawn St. George and Barb Josey, local author, presented about the free audio tour app that is being developed by Port Washington Historical Center in partnership with the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary. It is a 45-minute walking tour that starts in Port Washington by the light station and goes to the coal dock. The goal is to make landlubbers interested and excited in the stories of the water and the shipwrecks. Hoping to have the tour live by the end of May. The sanctuary paid for 1,000 downloads to help make it free to the public. For more information on the app please contact Dawn St. George.

SANCTUARY UPDATE/DISCUSSION/NEW BUSINESS -

The council celebrated Bill Moren's birthday. He's been a big supporter of the sanctuary and Port Washington.

Council member Jim Skibo recently passed away. Russ spoke about his role with the state of Wisconsin. He had a great vision for the sanctuary, was a huge supporter and will be missed by everyone.

At the beginning of May, Russ and Caitlin were in Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary assisting with mooring buoy deployment.

While he was there, also Russ attended the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' annual leadership team meeting which was hosted by Thunder Bay. One of the topics of the meeting was funding and advocacy to support the marine sanctuary the way it should be supported.

Russ showed pics of the Thunder Bay NMS campus. Russ envisions doing something in every community along the sanctuary coast, not just one central building like Thunder Bay has in Alpena. Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS can use Thunder Bay as an example of ways to integrate into the communities moving forward. Russ gave the example of the newly renovated movie theater in Alpena that has used the sanctuary for branding and is called the "Sanctuary Cinema."

During the meeting, the leadership members were given a tour of the Viking Cruise ship that is scheduled to visit Thunder Bay 20 times this summer. This Viking cruise is an adventure, learning tour that focuses on research and partners with NOAA scientists. The ships have submarines, equipment and laboratories on board. The ship cruises through the Great Lakes and

Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS on its way to Milwaukee. Would like to get them to stop in the sanctuary or at least talk about Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS and its conservation as it goes through the sanctuary.

There are currently five new potential sanctuary sites in designation including one in that was announced today in Lake Erie in Pennsylvania waters. Lake Ontario has published its proposed rule and should be finalized within the next year.

There was a question asked about the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERR) by Green Bay. Mike Friis said that the State has gotten back comments on the nomination document, so they are working on answering those. They are also working on the draft management plan and an environmental impact statement for the reserve. Upon designation, the Green Bay NERR would be the third National Estuarine Research Reserve within the Great Lakes, and the sole representative for the Lake Michigan-Huron biogeographic region.

Becky Schott, the photographer whose images are in the Bringing Shipwrecks to Life exhibit at the Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, gave a talk at the museum. Becky is a champion of the marine sanctuary; she travels the world talking about the places that she's been. She was recently had an article about Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS published in Alert Diver Magazine which reaches 200,000 divers.

Research Update:

Spotter Boys - Later in May, the sanctuary will be installing the three spotter buoys. These are the real time wind and wave buoys. Sanctuary staff is working with University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee on a larger buoy. It is currently being built and should be deployed in July. This buoy will be used for water quality, acoustics and current profilers. It is incredibly accurate and will be shared through the National Data Buoy Center.

2023 Field Projects - First field project of 2023 will be May 31 through June 9. NOAA researchers and divers will be in Wisconsin for a photogrammetry workshop and will combine this with a monitoring project. Conducted the same type of project last year, during which they recorded a number of shipwreck sites to provide data for monitoring and also assessed where buoys might be installed. This year they will focus on making photogrammetry models of the sites. These models are a great resource for monitoring the wrecks over time. If you would like to check out eight of these models you can view them on Sketchfab – Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS found [here](#). The goal of this summer's project is to create many more of these models to share on the site.

During the project they will also be looking into new sites that were found last year using hydrographic data.

Mooring Buoys - Working on mooring buoy plan, have submitted permits with U.S. Coast Guard and the Lake Carriers Association. Received special funding from the sanctuary program to buy the buoys, supplies and equipment. Hoping to get some in this summer.

Mapping – The entire sanctuary has been mapped with sonar. Hoping to get funding in 2024 from EPA to do visual ground truthing to build a map of the lake bed. Goal is to have a lake bed map for the entire sanctuary.

Get Into Your Sanctuary – In early August the sanctuary, UW Sea Grant, and the Wisconsin Historical Society are offering a professional development workshop for educators. This will focus on maritime heritage and Great Lakes literacy, and include an on-water experience aboard the RV Neeskay (from UW-Milwaukee). There will also be a youth workshop. The workshops will be based out of Sheboygan.

Socioeconomic Study - Quantifying the value of what we do is always a challenge with cultural resources. Planning to do a baseline study with a team from the University of West Virginia with some grant funding. In October the economists will host a workshop for community members to establish the information folks want to know. Russ is interested in how people value maritime heritage and how to create experiences to get at those needs.

Facilities Study – Received the final draft of the facilities study today. Community and state partners helped to create this vision. The study will be used for a road map, not a blue print. Russ will present more in depth on the study at a future meeting. The sanctuary did secure some funding to support some small-scale exhibits in the communities. Would like to hire a contractor to come up with a plan for each of these sites, sanctuary staff can do the content. This project will start the plan in the fall and hope to execute it next summer.

Russ gave some examples of different areas and projects that the sanctuary would like to focus on. One of those was the collaboration with the museum in Manitowoc and the 10,000 artifacts that were donated. An old car dealership has been located as a potential spot for a visible artifact storage area with a conservation lab in partnership with the sanctuary. There are also plans to update the sanctuary's exhibit at the museum and to build on the State of Wisconsin's maritime heritage trail.

The other big need is an administrative space and spaces for housing researchers. Thunder Bay has living quarters which makes it a desirable location for researchers.

Is there a marketing messaging that all the communities can rally behind?

As the Wisconsin Historical Society is building their history center, they will have pop up exhibits. Want to work in tandem with them for some sanctuary and state branding. It would be unique to each community but with an overarching messaging.

Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) June 6-8, 2023 – Tom Mlada spoke about CHOW which is a week-long event hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. Tom had the opportunity to attend when Wisconsin was in the designation process. During that event, Tom could see that the programming was really starting to focus more on Great Lakes not just oceans. It is based out of DC but there is a virtual option. For more information you can visit their website <https://marinesanctuary.org/capitol-hill-ocean-week-home/>.

Management Plan – Staff have been talking about investing in making it more public friendly. Does the council think that is important? Yes, the group thought that was good idea. We will need some help from the council with that project.

Scott Huebner gave some closing comments. Excited to move the council forward and to find some key projects to work on. He asked for any thoughts?

Vanessa said she thinks community events are important and would like to see a sanctuary presence at more community events. It's not always feasible to bring people to the sanctuary so can we bring it to them to create awareness?

The sanctuary just purchased a trade show booth, but would need help staffing it. Would be a good project for the council to put together a list of events and choose a few key ones to start. Great ideas, awareness creates advocates.

PUBLIC COMMENT: n/a

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, July 20 at 6pm**, in Two Rivers, exact location to be determined.

Links:

Sketchfab – Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast NMS Models -

<https://sketchfab.com/search?q=Wisconsin+Shipwreck+Coast+NMS&type=models>

CHOW - <https://marinesanctuary.org/capitol-hill-ocean-week-home/>