

**Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary  
Advisory Council  
June 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**Date: June 12, 2023**

**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Location: In-person, Annapolis Maritime Museum**

**Meeting Attendees**

**NOAA:** Paul “Sammy” Orlando, Megan Ossmann, Mark Losavio, Tane Casserley, and Shannon Ricles

**SAC Members:** Eileen Abel, Dan Hamilton, Maggie Ostdahl, Lee De Cola, Lucille Walker, John Stefancik

**SAC Alternates:** Sara Ramotnik, Lolita Kiorpes, Anne Stark, Erin (Youth Seat), Margo Jackson

**Government Agency and Tribe Members:** Mario Harley (Piscataway Conoy Tribe), Elizabeth Hughes (MD Dept. of Planning), Sam Drury (Charles County), Elena Gilroy (Charles County), Susan Langley (MD DNR), Elizabeth Moore (VA State Archaeologist)

**Guests:** Joe and Shelly Perrie (Atlantic Kayak), Christine Burns (Coastal Planner), Josh Kurtz (Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources), Brandon Rosario, Logan Blackstone

**WELCOME:**

Eileen Abel welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**SAC BUSINESS**

- Approval of minutes
  - Eileen called for the approval of the minutes from the March meeting. Dan Hamilton made a motion to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Lee De Cola.
- September SAC meeting
  - Eileen explained the options for a SAC meeting in September or October and said that Shannon will reach out to SAC over the next week to gauge interest in a meeting at the National Aquarium.
- Eileen reminded everyone of the letter of support the SAC sent for the designation of Lake Ontario. She said that the current system of 15 sanctuaries protecting over 620,000

square miles is growing. She then gave an overview of the new sanctuaries in the National Marine Sanctuary System. (See Appendix A for slides.)

- Six sanctuaries in the designation process: Lake Ontario, Lake Erie Quadrangle, Hudson Canyon, Chumash Heritage, Pacific Remote Islands, and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.
- There is a potential for the SAC to provide input and/or support at the public review stage.
- Sammy Orlando gave an overview of the SAC seats and indicated some minor possible changes in the future.
  - Sammy said that the SAC is a very important component of the sanctuary and that the first members joined in October 2020. Each seat has a three-year term and most of the current seats will expire in October 2023. With the restrictions placed on the SAC due to Covid, all of the initial meetings were held virtually and this is only the second in-person meeting in the past three years.
  - Sammy explained that with seats expiring, the seats will be re-advertised, and members have to reapply if they want to continue in their seat. Also, all current member seats will be extended to allow time for applicants to be seated.
  - The sanctuary is driven by the SAC's advice and that is the SAC's primary job. However, at MPNMS, the sanctuary does not manage anything that is a natural resource. It's all about advocacy and programming. And we work alongside the co-managers.
  - SAC seats will remain largely the same but some "refresh" is being considered to support new opportunities, including sanctuary management plan review, which includes:
    - Management Plan Action Plans:
      - Resources Protection
      - Recreation and Tourism
      - Education
      - Research, Science, and Technology
      - Sanctuary Operations and Administration
  - This will also be an opportunity to refresh some of the hard to fill vacancies.
  - Charter Revision process and timeline
    - July 2023 - request SAC charter extension
    - Summer 2023 - share proposed charter with MD and Charles County, and Eileen and Dan
    - Sep/Oct 2023 - Share proposed charter and seat changes with SAC
    - Oct 2023- Finalize charter and begin ONMS approval process
    - January 2024 - Advertise, clear and seat new council members
    - April 2024 - Hold first SAC meeting of the new council
  - Next steps:

- Member/alternates must indicate if they want to stay on the SAC through refresh period. If not, please contact Shannon Ricles and let her know.
- Once the refresh of SAC seats is approved, they will be advertised and then you can reapply.
- The selection process includes evaluation of the applications by the co-managers.
- Vetting process and final approval is given by the ONMS director.
- At the first meeting of the council in Spring 2024, the council votes for a chair and vice chair.
- Government seats are unaffected by the new charter, and representatives remains in place until their agency appoints a different person.

## SAC UPDATES:

- I. National Heritage Designation – Lucille Walker, (Cultural Heritage seat)  
Lucille talked about the recent [National Heritage Designation](#).
  - Lucille showed a 60 second video and said that everyone came together with their own stories and voices, and Southern Maryland is the birthplace of Maryland. Everyone is fundamental to the designation of a national heritage area, and it was an honor to see the tribes acknowledged in the designation.
  - Malloys Bay is the first national marine sanctuary on a river, and it is a cornerstone in Maryland.
  - The launch of the designation was really about partnerships. Lucille encouraged everyone to watch the governor’s speech if possible.
  
- II. Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) – Dan Hamilton, Business and Economic Development, Vice-Chair, gave a recap of the CHOW event he attended on June 8, 2023.
  - Three-day event with the first day visiting members on the Hill. Second day is a conference and training day and on the third day there is a gala.
  - [Annual gala](#) event sponsored by National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to recognizes champions of marine and Great Lakes stewardship. It was opportunity to meet and greet folks from Capitol Hill and to hear from prominent speakers.
  - Mario Harley, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, gave introductory remarks.
  - The gala was a nexus between climate change and oceans. The gala emphasized that we are the first generation on the planet to recognize the impact of humans on the earth.
  
- III. Megan Ossmann, Research Coordinator, gave an update on the BioBlitz held on April 29, 2023. (See Appendix A for slides.)
  - The local community came together and over 50 people attended the event, along with several SAC members – thank you!
  - Staff and partners set up exhibits with educational activities and information about the sanctuary.
  - iNaturalist indicated that 272 observations were recorded and 157 species were identified.

- Very successful for the first BioBlitz and we are looking forward to the one on September 9.

IV. Mark Losavio, Media and Outreach Specialist, showcased the Terrain360 website and gave an update on its current status. (See Appendix A for slides.)

- The project is funded by a Congressional earmark in order to create an ecological themed tour of water trails and three hiking trails. It is due to rollout to Congress later this fall.
- Team will go out this week (June 13) to film the rest of the ecology trails.
- When the website is finished, it will be available on the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation website.
- Sammy also said that the content of the website makes connections to Charles County, Maryland tourism, and others.
- Sammy encouraged everyone to begin thinking of ways to engage story tellers using this tool. (Fisheries, DoD, indigenous stories, etc.)
- Suggestion to include ADA accessibility information about hiking trails.

Mark also and talked about upcoming events.

- Pride in the Ocean event will be hosted by MPNMS, and it is the only Pride celebration in the sanctuary system.
- The event is in conjunction with the Potomac Pride Paddle at Mattawoman Creek in Indian Head.
- Mark said everyone is invited and he encouraged everyone to come out on Saturday, June 24 for the event.
- Mark asked everyone to please share the social media posts about the event, and he reminded everyone to enter the Get Into Your Sanctuary photo contest.

V. Education Updates, Shannon Ricles, Education and Outreach Coordinator

- Shannon detailed the teacher/counselor training workshop that was held for Charles County Rec and Parks Department in support of their summer camp programs. Two camp programs, water quality and remotely operated vehicle camps, were piloted last summer by interns and MPNMS staff. They will be offered again this year as a part of the county's summer program offerings.
- [LEAP Forward](#) - Mallows Bay was invited to give two presentations on remotely operated vehicles to a group of about 60 students. In May, Shannon met with the students at the SMART building in California, Maryland, and taught the science behind ROVs and how they are used in exploration and scientific studies. In June, Shannon met with them for a second time to build and test ROVs and to talk about the various career opportunities within NOAA.
- Shannon said that the partnership between Monitor NMS and The Mariners' Museum and Park for B-WET ended its second year. *Monitor* staff supported about 2,000 student who came to the park for field trips.
- The Ocean Guardian School program continues with three North Carolina schools. Shannon also said that we are looking forward to a possible Ocean Guardian School in Maryland.
- Shannon also said that Mallows is looking for opportunities to grow a STEM program

- Reactivate the Education Working Group.
- Working with Calvert County Schools STEM Coordinator to host possible ROV programs.
- Would like to work with other museums and do more with the Charles County Parks and Rec Department. Would also like to partner on grants.

VI. Anne Stark - there is an arts center in Smallwood State Park where there will be an art and photo contest. It will run for three weekends (September 15 - October 8th), several speakers from different organizations. She encourages anyone interested to have a booth and join the event. More information to come.

VII. Susan Langley said that ECU has submitted a permit for the field school and several of the theses and proposals are for research in Mallows Bay. She said that one project will look at the microbiomes of the Accomack. There will also be presentations given at the Waterman's Museum and at Quantico. She reminded everyone of the River Palooza event in August.

VIII. Sammy gave an update on the new proposed visitor center - \$5 million in funding through the Inflation Reduction Act

- Charles County received funding to conduct a feasibility study for a design and location, and we are working with them. The money needs to be spent within three years.
- SAC members will have opportunities to provide feedback throughout the process but it will move quickly once it is approved.

IX. Lolita said that she will be involved in two conferences - Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Education conference next week and the Mid-Atlantic Marine Educators Association in November.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eileen Abel asked if there were any members of the public who would like to make a comment.

- There were no public comments.

**ADJOURN:** As there was no other business, a motioned was made by Mario Harley and seconded by Dan Hamilton to adjourn the meeting.

#### **Upcoming 2023 Meetings & Events:**

BioBlitz – September 9, 2023

SAC Meeting – September 11, 2023

SAC Meeting – December 4, 2023



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## **New Proposed Sanctuaries:**

- **Locations**
- **Process**
- **SAC support?**



## DESIGNATION PROCESS STEPS

NOAA identifies areas to consider for national marine sanctuary designation through the community-based Sanctuary Nomination Process. Nominations that successfully complete the process are added to an inventory of areas NOAA could consider for designation. The process for designating a new national marine sanctuary has four steps:



1

**SCOPING:** NOAA announces its intent to designate a new national marine sanctuary and asks the public for input on potential boundaries, resources that could be protected, issues NOAA should consider and any information that should be included in the resource analysis.



2

**SANCTUARY PROPOSAL:** NOAA prepares draft designation documents including a draft management plan, draft environmental impact statement that analyzes a range of alternatives, proposed regulations and proposed boundaries. NOAA may also form an advisory council to help inform the proposal and focus stakeholder participation.



3

**PUBLIC REVIEW:** The public, agency partners, tribes and other stakeholders provide input on the draft documents. NOAA considers all input and determines appropriate changes.



4

**SANCTUARY DESIGNATION:** NOAA makes a final decision and prepares final documents. Before the designation becomes effective, the Governor reviews the documents. Congress also has the opportunity to review the documents.



Potential SAC Input





# Sanctuary Updates

MPNMS SAC Meeting  
June 12, 2023

Ecology Updates - Megan Ossmann  
Outreach Updates - Mark Losavio

# BioBlitz Recap



- Over 50 people attended
  - Families
  - Individuals
  - Girl Scout troops
  - Charles County Citizens Academy
  - SAC members
- Many attendees from Charles County, but also from Anne Arundel County, Washington D.C., and northern VA



# BioBlitz Recap



- Guided hikes from Lynne Wheeler and Kerry Wixted
- Net seining with Maryland DNR
- Kayak tours with Atlantic Kayak
- Electrofishing survey by SERC
- Piscataway table display
- Education station run by Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center



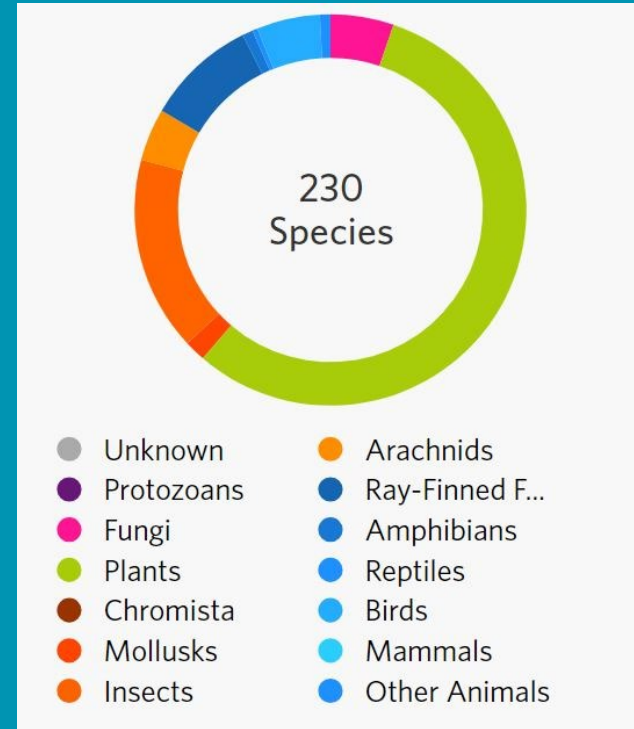
# BioBlitz Recap



During the event participants collected **391 observations** of **230 different species!** Including **140 new species** that had not previously been recorded at Mallows Bay with iNaturalist.

We now have over **1,000 observations** of nearly **500 different species** recorded at Mallows Bay.

This will help inform our research and monitoring efforts, as well as the development of outreach and interpretation products.



# BioBlitz Recap



For the City Nature Challenge, the DC metropolitan area ranked **5th** among 482 cities for the number of people involved, **7th** for the number of observations, and **9th** for number of species!



# BioBlitz Recap



“Your Charles County” YouTube video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzrrAmLf8H0>

# BioBlitz Recap



Save the date for our next BioBlitz on September 9th!



# Upcoming Projects



- Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) survey on June 21st
  - Led by Maryland DNR, joined by partners from the Accokeek Foundation, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, and others
  - The start of a regular survey effort to establish baseline habitat conditions and monitor changes over time
- Updates to Terrain 360 ecology-themed virtual tour







# Terrain 360 Updates!





# MALLOWS BAY-POTOMAC RIVER NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY


## STREET-LEVEL IMAGERY, MAPS & POINTS OF INTEREST


[Learn More about this NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY](#)


[LEARN MORE ABOUT TERRAIN360](#)

 [Safety Information](#)

 [Paddle Tour](#)

 [Current Conditions](#)

 [Getting There](#)

 [Jump to Tour](#)

## MALLOWS BAY EMERGENCY & SAFETY INFORMATION

Due to the location of the park, during an emergency please call the Charles County Sheriff's Department, they will connect caller with the county 911 services.

The number is [301-932-2222](tel:301-932-2222)

**\*Please install this number on your device.**

## PADDLING SAFETY TIPS

- ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.
- PADDLE WITH OTHERS IF POSSIBLE.
- COLD WATER TEMPERATURES ARE HAZARDOUS TO PADDLERS. Paddling is recommended between May and September.
- WHEN PADDLING IN WIND, STAY CLOSE TO SHORE. • RESPECT WILDLIFE. Animals and birds should be viewed from a distance.
- BEWARE OF HIDDEN WRECKS. It is dangerous to travel through the central shipwreck cluster, especially during high tide when ship remains lie just below the waterline and are invisible to the paddler.



# WATER TRAILS

Explore the Shipwrecks and Ecology at Mallows Bay

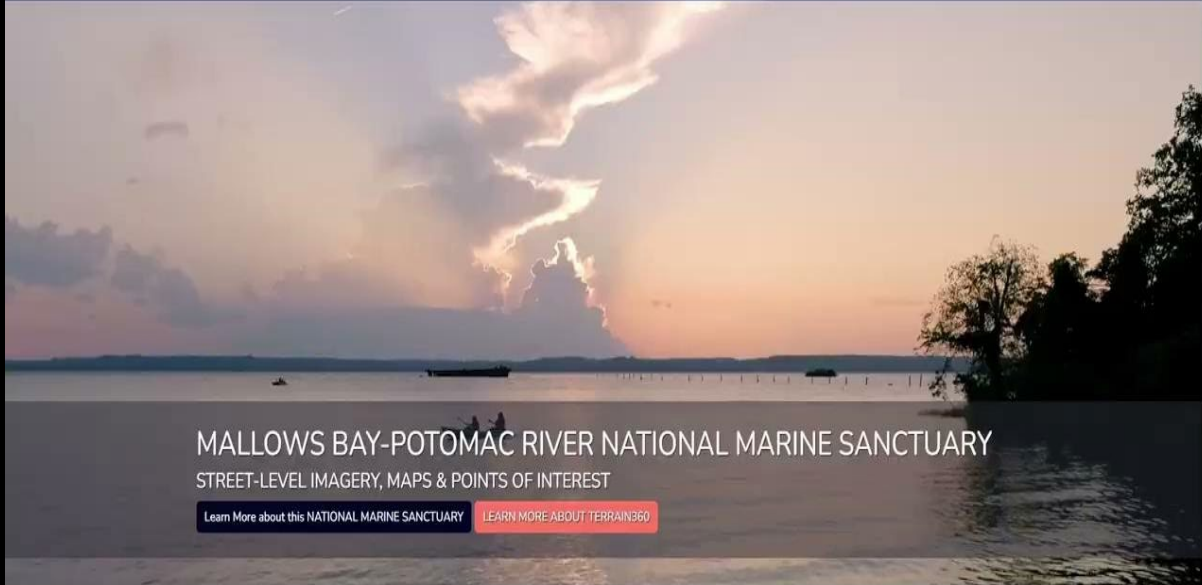
[Click Here](#)



# HIKING TRAILS

Explore the trails at Mallows Bay

[Click Here](#)

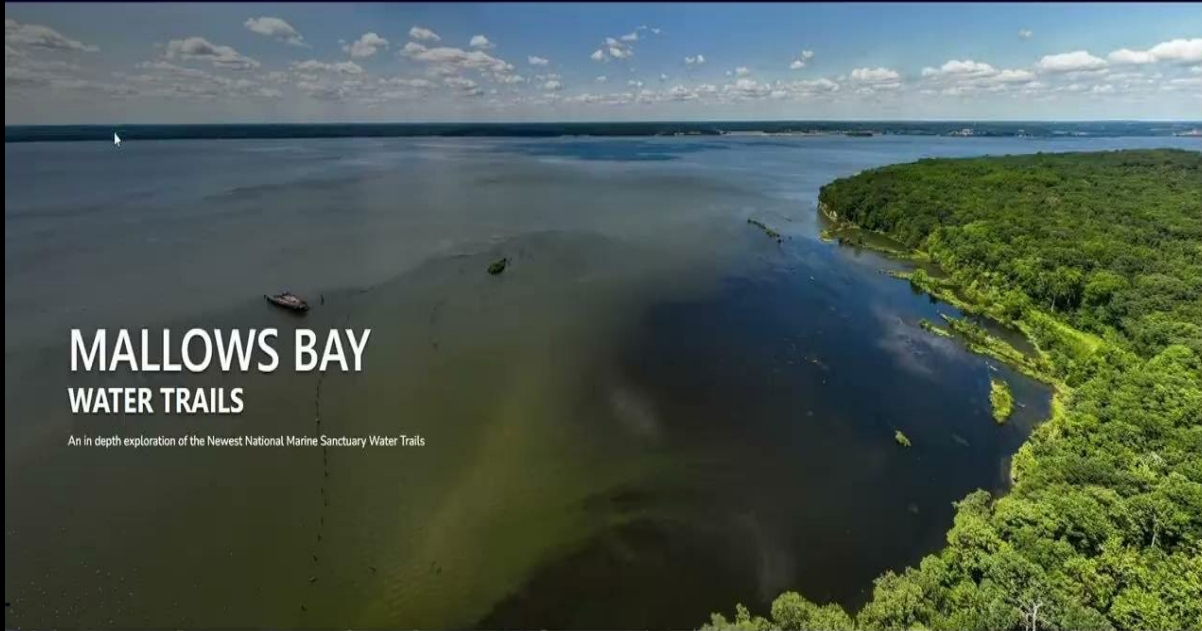


# MALLOWS BAY-POTOMAC RIVER NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

STREET-LEVEL IMAGERY, MAPS & POINTS OF INTEREST

[Learn More about this NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY](#)

[LEARN MORE ABOUT TERRAIN360](#)



# MALLOWS BAY WATER TRAILS

An in depth exploration of the Newest National Marine Sanctuary Water Trails

[Mallows Bay Home](#) / [Water Trails](#)



# MALLOWS BAY ECOLOGY TOUR

An in depth exploration of the Newest National Marine Sanctuary Water Trails



# HIKING AT MALLOWS BAY

## EXPLORE THE TRAIL & ECOLOGY AT MALLOWS BAY

An in depth exploration of the Newest National Marine Sanctuary

[Mallows Bay Home](#) / [Hiking](#)





Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



**NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARIES**

A vibrant collage of ocean-related images. The top row features coral reefs, two white birds on a shore, a close-up of a fish's face, and various sea anemones. The middle row includes a sunset over the ocean, a close-up of a sea anemone, a colorful coral reef, a sunset with kayakers, and a starfish. The bottom half of the collage is dominated by underwater scenes, showing a diver, various fish species, a sea turtle, and a jellyfish. The central text 'Pride in the Ocean!' is overlaid in white on a dark background.

# Pride in the Ocean!



# POTOMAC PRIDE PADDLE!

**GAMES**

**BOAT DECORATING**

**PADDLING**

**PICNICKING**

MALLOWS BAY—  
POTOMAC RIVER  
NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARY

CHARLES COUNTY  
**PRIDE**

ATLANTIC  
 KAYAK

National  
Marine Sanctuary  
Foundation  
DISCOVER WONDER







# Pride Day at the Bay!



# Photo Contest!









LEE DE COLA



MICHELE PERRIE



MARK LOSAVIO



J P BROOKS



KENNETH WALKER