

# SANCTUARY WATCH

## National Marine Sanctuaries Gain Historic Funding

President Clinton recently signed into law an \$11.7 million increase for the nation's 12 marine sanctuaries nearly doubling the program's 1999 budget of \$14.4 million to \$26 million. This action reflects the nation's growing commitment to the conservation of our oceans for this and future generations.

"Americans understand the need to preserve our oceans just as we preserve our lands. National marine sanctuaries help us protect these precious resources," U.S. Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley said. "Thanks to the support of the Administration and Congress, the 12 marine sanctuaries have been given a generous opportunity to expand their ongoing research and education programs so we can ensure that these natural treasures will be here for future generations."

This renewed commitment to the oceans grew out of the President's Lands Legacy Initiative. The 1999 Initiative empowers existing sanctuaries to better protect coral reefs, reduce the threat of oil spills by diverting vessels away from sensitive habitat, maintain healthy habitats for endangered and threatened species, and bring the ocean world to the public through marine visitor centers.

This budget increase will allow the National Marine Sanctuary Program to protect and restore marine environments and continue to implement the program's mission to restore degraded habitats; improve water quality; protect fish habitats, coral reefs and marine mammals; and guard submerged historical treasures.

Fiscal year 2000 sanctuary priorities include the creation of a National Education Plan, reviews of the management plans for the Channel Islands, Gray's Reef, and Stellwagen Bank Sanctuaries, establishing an ecological reserve in the Tortugas area of the Florida Keys Sanctuary, site characterizations of individual sites, the completion of a systemwide enforcement strategy and implementation of enforcement pilot projects at Stellwagen Bank and Monterey Bay Sanctuaries, and plans for a network of interpretive marine education centers.

## Sanctuaries Begin Work on National Education Plan

The National Marine Sanctuary Program continues to work on instilling a national ocean ethic for conservation. Educating the public about our ocean world and the importance of conservation is an integral part of the National Program. Today each of the 12 sanctuary sites contribute to local and national efforts designed to increase understanding and promote stewardship of the marine environment. In an effort to build on the strengths and commonalties among field sites, the Program is rededicating its long-standing commitment to an effective education program. In

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## Chief's Signal

*The year 2000 promises to be an exciting one for NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries Program. All of us within the Program understand that the truly historic funding level now available to us provides us with greater opportunities to preserve our nation's marine environment. With these opportunities come a larger responsibility to protect our nation's twelve marine sanctuaries. Since the program's inception, we have worked to protect fish habitats, coral reefs, and vulnerable marine mammals, to restore damaged habitats, and improve water quality. In some sanctuaries, efforts have focused on preserving submerged historical treasures like the famous Civil War vessel, the Monitor.*

*As we move into the new millennium, we will continue to build upon our past efforts and strive towards reaching the new goals we have set for FY2000.*

*These include:*

- *a systemwide enforcement strategy and implement pilot programs at two sites*
  - *a marine zoning strategy*
  - *completion of management reviews now underway in three sanctuaries*
  - *a complete site characterization at one sanctuary that may be used as a model for others.*
  - *a new National Education Plan*
  - *Recovery of the steam engine from the historic Civil War vessel, the Monitor.*
- We in the National Marine Sanctuaries Program are gearing up to achieve these priorities in 2000.*

*Stephanie Thourston*

order to best fulfill this purpose, the Sanctuaries initiated a strategic planning process that renews the role of education within the program.

This project—a new National Education Plan— defines the long-term mission, goals, and objectives for the Sanctuaries' education efforts as well as a scope and sequence for implementing the plan nationwide. Recently, we launched this new venture with an ad hoc group of Education Coordinators who represent the broad range of field sites and educational perspectives.

This "Working Group" will tackle fundamental issues that will shape the Sanctuaries' education efforts for the next decade. For example, the group is asked to grapple with such questions as: How does the Sanctuary Program select its most important audiences? What standards should it apply for the education component of field site management plans? How does it form national partnerships and still guarantee site flexibility for regional needs? What role does the Program fulfill in the scope of our nation's marine education and how can the Program maintain a balance between national and site-based program focus and resource allocation? The group also plans to explore the most effective evaluation tools to use in building a results-based Sanctuaries education program and decide on what professional development Sanctuary Education Coordinators can use to their improve their ability to educate ocean communities.

By building on the National Marine Sanctuary Program's strategic goal of instilling a conservation ethic, the Education Coordinators from each sanctuary came together and crafted a mission statement to guide the planning process—"To promote public understanding of our marine sanctuaries and to empower citizens with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions which lead to stewardship of aquatic ecosystems."

July 2000 is the scheduled date for completion of the plan's working draft, and comments will be incorporated until June 1, 2000. Throughout the development of this new Education Plan, readers' comments and suggestions are welcomed. Please send them directly to me at Sarah.Mitchell@noaa.gov.

—Sarah Mitchell  
National Education Coordinator

*Kids' activities, special events and programs help to bring the Sanctuary to the public.*



Photo: Sandy Howard

## Sanctuaries Begin Systemwide Management Plan Review Process

In an effort to restore and protect our nation's marine treasures, in 1998 the National Marine Sanctuary Program initiated a project to revise management plans for the 12 existing sanctuaries. These plans guide each individual sanctuary in its marine conservation efforts.

A team composed of national office and on-site personnel began work 18 months ago in three sanctuaries: Channel Islands, California, Stellwagen Bank, Massachusetts, and Gray's Reef, Georgia. Channel Islands completed public scoping meetings in August and now moves closer to targeted workshops in Spring 2000; a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and management plan are expected to be released for public review by the end of 2000. Gray's Reef conducted scoping meetings in December and attracted crowds of over 150 people from neighboring communities. This sanctuary hopes to release their DEIS and management plan by the end of the year. Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary has also completed scoping meetings and are scheduling their targeted workshops for late Spring. Management plan review for the entire system is expected to continue over the next 7 to 10 years.

—Liz Moore

## Sanctuary Site Characterizations

One of the major priorities for the National Marine Sanctuary Program over the next few years will be site characterizations—summarizing what we know and, just as important, what we don't know about the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics within each sanctuary. This new information will be used to improve marine resources management at each site and help to direct future research.

The project's first step is to implement site characterization. The process will likely include: reviewing site-specific management priorities; defining key topics; selecting local and regional topic experts to capture and synthesize the existing knowledge base, highlight gaps, and recommend future research; and identifying a series of specific products (e.g. documents, CDs, digital maps, Web sites, data bases).

Gray's Reef, Stellwagen Bank, and Channel Islands Sanctuaries are slated for the first site

characterizations. Detailed site characterizations for each of NOAA's 12 marine sanctuaries are expected to be completed over the next five years.

—Charles Alexander

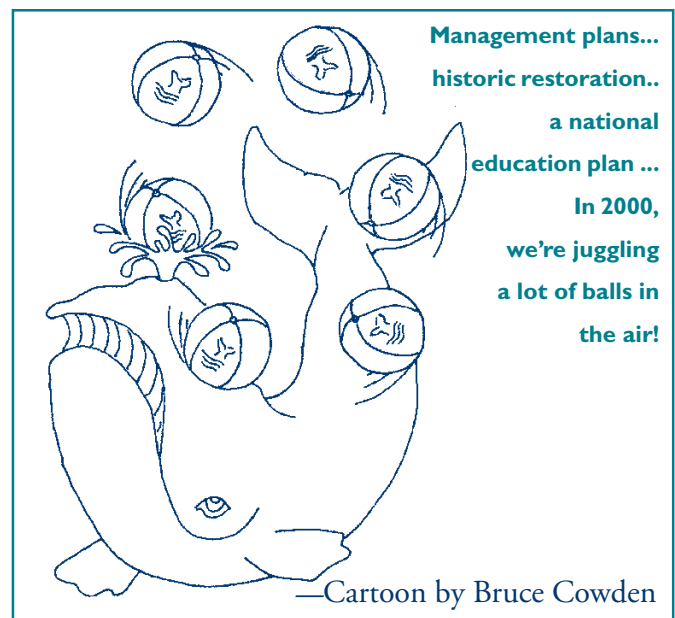
## Marine Zoning in NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries

What exactly is marine zoning? The National Marine Sanctuary Program defines a zone as a discrete area contained within the boundary of a protected area with special guidelines or regulations for activities that differ from the guidelines or regulations of the larger protected area.

Marine zoning is the act of designating and managing discrete areas where uses of, access to, and monitoring of sanctuary resources are balanced with the primary mandate of resource protection. While some people equate marine zoning with "no-take zones," marine zoning is more likely to be used to help manage conflicting or incompatible uses, such as the use of motorized personal watercraft or ocean dumping.

The program has used marine zoning as a management tool for some time at the site level. The National Program is now in the process of creating a national standard that promotes the sanctuaries' conservation ethic and allows flexibility for needs on the individual site level.

—Liz Moore





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1305 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-713-3125, ext. 124  
301-713-0404  
<http://www.sanctuaries.nos.noaa.gov>

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**WATCH**

**vision** *People value marine sanctuaries as treasured places protected for future generations.*

**mission** *Serve as the trustee for the nation's system of marine protected areas to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy.*

## January Calendar

### Natural events

- Gray Whales continue their migration south to Baja, California through NOAA's Channel Islands Sanctuary.
- Hammerhead sharks school around the East and West Flower Garden Banks Sanctuary.

**January 4 - 9** • Sanctuary staff participate in the Annual Society for Historical Archaeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Quebec City, Canada to discuss management of the sanctuaries' submerged cultural resources.

**January 10 - 25** • Sustainable Seas Expeditions begin deep sea exploration and education activities in the Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale Sanctuary.

**January 14** • Monterey Bay Sanctuary Announces its Water Quality Protection Plan and a unique partnership with the state's agricultural and environmental communities and Federal, state and local governments.

**January 31** • The *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary celebrates the 25th anniversary of its designation.

## Sustainable Seas Expeditions visit Hawaiian Islands Sanctuary

Sustainable Seas Expeditions (SSE), the first systematic exploration of the deep waters of America's National Marine Sanctuaries System, heads to NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary on January 10, 2000 for 10 days of exploration and education. SSE is a five-year program of the National Geographic Society in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and is made possible by the Richard & Goldman Fund.

The Hawaii Sustainable Seas Expeditions plan to increase public awareness of the Sanctuary, educate the public about humpback whales and their habitat, and document humpback whale habitat and behavior.

During the first stage of Hawaii's SSE, January 10-14, explorers will practice shipboard procedures, test submersibles and equipment, conduct pilot checkout dives and dives for education and outreach purposes. In the expeditions' second stage, January 15-19, SSE scientists will conduct a discrete set of reconnaissance tasks at as many as ten locations within the sanctuary, all located in the waters between Maui, Lana'i, and Kaho'olawe. After the mission's at-sea portion, several education and outreach efforts will be held between January 20-25. For more information on these exciting explorations, see <http://sustainableseas.noaa.gov/>.

—Nancy O'Donnell

**Sanctuary Watch** is a publication of NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries Program.

Managing Editor: Nancy O'Donnell

Graphic Artist: Sandy Gant

Matt Stout, Chief, Stewardship Development Branch

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