

SANCTUARY WATCH

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President Clinton announces new era in ocean exploration

In a White House ceremony on June 12, President Clinton invigorated new interest in the nation's still undiscovered marine environment and announced a new era of collaborative ocean exploration and protection.

During the "Millennium Council Millennium Matinee, Exploration: Under the Seas, Beyond the Stars," the President described a variety of projects that will include exploration on both oceans and the Gulf Coast. One project will take ocean explorers deep into the Hudson Canyon, less than 100 miles off New York City, where many economically and ecologically valuable species abound. The deep reefs and seeps off the Gulf Coast of Florida with its dense thickets of giant worms and mussel beds is another area of exploration. On the West Coast off central California, scientists will focus on the 30 mile-wide, 9000-foot Davidson Seamount an area that



Photo: Margo Jackson

On May 26 President Clinton announced a new Executive Order on Marine Protected Areas while visiting Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland.

is home to a mixture of unusual deep-sea animals, including large, dense patches of sponges and extremely old coral forests.

In furthering knowledge of unknown marine areas, President Clinton also directed the Department of Commerce to convene a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists to develop recommendations for a national *(Cont. pg. 4)*

Vessel Traffic Lessens in Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary

Five hundred miles of California coastline from San Francisco to Los Angeles benefits from an agreement brokered by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and recently approved by the U.N. International Maritime IMO that moves large vessel traffic 15 miles offshore and lessens the risk of oil spill and marine destruction to three of the nation's marine sanctuaries.

The IMO, in a May meeting in London, approved the U.S. proposal to move ships farther offshore and modify certain approaches to and from major ports. The new routing measures are primarily designed to improve protection for the Channel Islands, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay Sanctuaries. "This landmark agreement is an excellent example of how NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries can be a catalyst to bring agencies, industry and



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(Cont. pg. X)

International Marine Debris Conference Begins in Hawaii

The International Marine Debris Conference on Derelict Fishing Gear and the Ocean Environments convenes August 6-11 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Marine debris has increased ecological and economic costs to the marine environment. It also presents hazards in vessel navigation and public safety.

Sponsored by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, the conference brings together a diverse body of participants: government representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, Japan, Canada and Micronesia, federal agencies such as the NMFS, State Department, EPA, and the Center for Marine Conservation. Its purpose is to evaluate past, present and future mitigation efforts, including marine debris removal, identifying sources of marine debris, enforcement and policy initiatives. An action plan to lesson damage from derelict fishing gear and reduce their impact on marine species and the environment is expected at the conclusion of the five-day conference.

Keynote Speaker U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye will speak on "Society's role and Obligations as Stewards of the Ocean Environment. Participants also include NOAA Undersecretary Dr. D. James Baker, ocean conservationist and explorer Jean-Michel Cousteau, Research Triangle scientists Anthony Andrady, and Senators Daniel Akaka and Rep. Neil Abercrombie.

For more information on the conference, call 808-875-2317 or e-mail questions to info@mauiPacific.org.

Sustainable Seas Expeditions Enjoys a Busy Summer in Sanctuaries

The Sustainable Seas Expeditions, the NOAA and National Geographic Society's undersea exploration of the national marine sanctuaries, began its summer season in June in the Channel Islands Sanctuary. For several days, Expeditions' sub, DeepWorker, explored the islands to produce transects and roving surveys to collect video footage, still photographs, and water quality data. On June 8th SSE provided shared explorations with 250

participants around the country via the Internet and satellite downlink. In late June, SSE moved to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary for Students at Sea events, an Internet uplink with NASA Oceanography that featured Mike Guardino, Teacher-in-the-Sea. On July 4 DeepWorker pilot, Kip Evans, experienced underwater fireworks as he turned off the sub's lights at 1000 feet for a show of Krill bioluminescence. On subsequent days, explorers toured the head of the Monterey Bay Canyon, one of the largest on the nation's west coastline.

National Marine Sanctuary Holds Annual Leadership Team Meeting

The National Marine Sanctuary Program's Leadership Team met in Galveston, TX June 7-9. G. P. Schmahl, manager of Flower Gardens Bank National Marine Sanctuary hosted the annual summer meeting that brings together national headquarters staff and managers from the nation's 12 marine sanctuaries.

Dan Basta, the sanctuary program's acting director began the meeting with a list of hot items important to the program in the coming months. These include The JASON Project partnership; the National Education Plan; the recent announcement by President Clinton concerning Marine Protected Areas or MPAs; and the program's continuing work with the Sustainable Seas Expeditions; as well as other ongoing projects and NOAA and NOS programs.

Deputy Director Craig McLean reported on personnel, reorganization, and budget matters; an update on the progress of the *Monitor 2000* mission; and the program's plan for ocean exploration.

Each site and branch from the national headquarters gave a presentation on the "state of the sanctuary" from their individual vantagepoint. The presentations will be used in a final report to be released this summer as a public document.

After a day of near and long-term budget planning, the team discussed on policy procedures, specific policy discussions on fishery regulations, and base-line resource definitions.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Tom Martin of Martin and Associates, who has been

contracted to do an analysis regarding the needs of each site for visitor centers and site interpretation.

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meets in Pago Pago in August

The fifth meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force will be held Saturday, August 5 through Monday, August 7, 2000 in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the meeting brings together scientists and stakeholders from many nations to review and discuss efforts to implement the National Action Plan adopted by the Task Force at its March meeting.

NEED ANOTHER PARAGRAPH ON THE INITIATIVE OR CORAL REEFS IN GENERAL

Monitor Mission 2000

The *Monitor* 2000 Expedition continues off the coast of North Carolina. Using a 300-foot barge as work platform, NOAA and the U.S. Navy are working to stabilize the *Monitor's* hull and prepare her historic engine for recovery. Navy divers have placed frames holding bags into which grout (cement) is being pumped to shore up the hull and prevent its collapse. Once the shoring has been completed, Navy divers will begin removing lower hull plating to gain access to the engineering space. The engine will be separated from the hull and attached to a series of lifting slings which will, in turn, be connected to a steel lifting frame. Time and weather permitting, the engine will be recovering and transported to the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, VA, for conservation and eventual exhibition.

Stabilizing the *Monitor's* hull and recovering major components of the wreck are part of a long-range plan for the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary entitled, *Charting a new Course for the Monitor*, which was submitted to Congress in April 1998. The plan describes the rapid disintegration of the *Monitor*, discusses various action options, and recommends stabilization, and selective recovery.

All planning and field operations conducted since the comprehensive plan was submitted have followed the plan's recommendations.

Vessel Traffic Agreement (Cont. pg. 1)

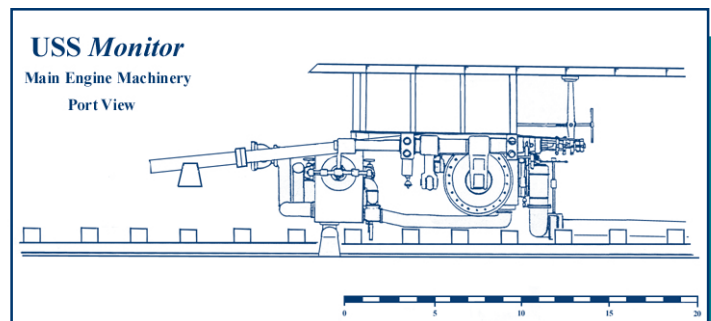
environmental groups together to protect marine resources and ensure the viability of the region's critical shipping industry," said Secretary of Commerce William Daley. "This cooperative effort allowed the group to reach consensus on the vessel traffic recommendations and stands as a model for resolving other resource management issues around the country."

More than 4,000 large vessels transit the central California coast every year. They pose a potential risk of catastrophic spills from the large amounts of heavy fuel oil they use to power themselves.

The California sanctuaries are home to an extraordinarily diverse array of marine mammals, seabirds, fish, and invertebrates. Many of these ocean inhabitants, such as sea otters and seabirds, are particularly susceptible to the effects of an oil spill.

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"I am very pleased that this important initiative, developed with extensive local involvement, was formally adopted internationally," said William J. Douros, superintendent of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. "These measures will greatly reduce the chance for a catastrophic accident in our sanctuary."



Sketch of the famed Civil War Vessel's engine.



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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.*

August/September Calendar

Natural events

• Flower Garden Banks puts on an annual mass coral spawning described as “an upside down snowstorm” at the sanctuary. Recreational divers first discovered and reported on this phenomenon in 1990. In September whale watching begins in the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary and the beautiful creatures flock its waters to feed and breed in the nutrient-rich waters.

August 11 - 13 • Thinking Like An Ocean: Sea Kayaking the Olympic Coast. Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. Experience the wild Olympic Coast a few have, from the water level perspective of a sea kayak.

September 16 • 16th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day. Become a steward of our beaches and Sanctuary by cleaning up the garbage that pollutes our Sanctuary waters. Join FMSA and Sanctuary Staff at a cleanup of Crissy Field Beach in the Presidio of San Francisco. Enjoy refreshments and a tour of Call Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, (415) 561-6625 for reservations.

A new era of ocean exploration promised *(Cont'd from pg. 1)*

ocean exploration strategy.

This important new initiative is a result of the National Ocean Conference held in Monterey, California in 1998. At that meeting, the President and Vice President Gore met with staff from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA leadership, members of Congress and other ocean supporters to discuss the state of the world's oceans. Later the President pledged new efforts to restore ailing coral reefs, rebuild exhausted marine fisheries and protect the nation's coastlines from oil drilling. In addition, President Clinton directed his Cabinet to develop recommendations for a coordinated, disciplined, long-term federal ocean policy. In its 1999 report, “Turning to the Sea: America's ocean Future,” the Cabinet outlined strategies to protect and sustainably use the nation's network of marine protected areas.

The report notes that even though the oceans cover 70% of the planet, scientists estimate that over 90% of our underwater world remains unknown and unseen. Scientists believe that these unexplored regions may hold clues to the origin of life on Earth, cures for human diseases, answers to problem of overfishing and the possibility of sustainable use, and information on how to protect marine endangered species.

Finally, the President has directed the Secretary of Commerce to convene a panel of leading ocean explorers, educators, and scientists to present a report within 120 days on recommendations for national oceans explorations strategy.

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