

GFNMS Advisory Virtual Advisory Council Meeting
18February2021
CBNMS Superintendent's Report – Dan Howard

Well, vaccines are starting to roll in, and a new administration is in place with priorities that are right in line with sanctuaries – addressing climate change, preserving 30% of land and water by 2030, and improving social justice. It's a new day.

Well almost a new day... CBNMS staff are still teleworking. The state has recently relaxed the shelter in place order but we are still in the purple tier and do not have immediate plans to return to the office.

The Point Reyes National Seashore has a new superintendent who reported to the Park a couple weeks ago. His name is Craig Kenkel and he was the superintendent at the Maritime Museum at Fisherman's Wharf several years ago. He has a background in cultural heritage and is coming from a park in Ohio where he was the superintendent. I had a good call with him last week and I'm looking forward to working with him and Park staff in the coming year.

Research

Dani Lipski continues to work with all staff to revise the CBNMS condition report. She completed a series of virtual workshops with experts to identify resources that we should be considering to evaluate their current status and trends. Workshops included looking at Habitat, Living Resources, Water Quality and Climate Change. The next set of meetings in the spring will be to identify the current status and trends of resources in the sanctuary. We will use the condition report to document status and trends of habitats, oceanography, and selected species since our last report in 2009. This information will be used when we revise our management plan in 2022 and 2023 that will guide our management of the sanctuary for the next 5 years.

Thanks to funding from our foundation and staff from the Bodega Marine Laboratory, "we" were able to change out our Hypoxia (reduced oxygen in the water) sensors earlier in the year and redeploy the equipment. Kate Hewitt from the Bodega Marine Lab will be giving a presentation to our advisory council on her research using data from the sensors on Cordell Bank on February 25th if you want to join us and get the latest information on the hypoxia data.

As of today, Dani, GFNMS, GFA staff, and Point Blue Conservation Science staff are planning to conduct our first 2021 Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies cruise in late April on the NOAA research vessel Shimada. Staff will follow a series of COVID protocols to be on the ship. Plans could change depending on current state of COVID in the spring.

Education

Jenny is planning to roll out virtual classroom visits to teachers focused on a changing climate and impacts to sanctuaries. Other themes for different grade levels may be developed if additional help can be brought on board.

Jenny is working with Carol Preston to install new exhibits in the Bear Valley Visitor Center at the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Resource Protection

Our joint Vessel Speed Reduction program continues to increase industry cooperation. In 2020, cooperation increased from 58% in 2019 to 64% in 2020. In addition to our ship strike concerns, entanglement of humpback whales is now garnering attention from the state fishery managers. Opening day for the commercial fishery was delayed in November due to the presence of humpback whales. It is extremely challenging to know when to open the season when there are whales in the area.

Volunteer of the Year

And I'll finish with announcing that CBNMS selected Dick Ogg as our 2020 volunteer of the year. Dick is a commercial fisherman out of Bodega Bay and has passion for the ocean. He is working tirelessly with all stakeholders on the whale entanglement issue. We were happy to nominate Dick as our volunteer of the year for 2020.