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COMMERCE AND INTERIOR DEPARTMENTS SELECT CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREA FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Today, the Department of Commerce, with assistance from the Department of the Interior, named final candidates for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee. Required as part of Presidential Executive Order 13158 dealing with Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the 30-person committee represents a broad stakeholder community, including scientists, academia, commercial and recreational fishermen, resource users and managers, and environmentalists.

The advisory committee's duties include providing advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on implementation of aspects of the MPA Executive Order. The members may establish working groups, subcommittees, or task forces as needed to fulfill the committee's goals. They also will create a scientific working group of experts in marine and ocean science fields, which will assess the conditions of natural and submerged cultural resources within the nation's MPAs. The members will serve for two or three-year terms, and will elect a chairperson from the group.

"Marine protected areas are important resource management tools," said Commerce Secretary Don Evans. "We look forward to strong leadership from these individuals in helping us determine how best to continue our efforts, balancing conservation needs with commercial and recreational interests as we move forward to protect the marine environment for present and future generations."

The committee will be supported by the National Marine Protected Areas Center, established by NOAA in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, as required by Executive Order. The MPA Center is charged with providing federal, state, territorial, tribal and local governments with the information, technologies, training and strategies to coordinate federal activities related to MPAs.

Final candidates for the MPA Federal Advisory Committee are:

- Dr. Tundi Agardy, Sound Seas; Bethesda, Md.
- Mr. Robert Bendick, Jr., The Nature Conservancy; Altamonte Springs, Fla.
- Mr. David Benton, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Anchorage, Alaska
- Dr. Daniel Bromley, University of Wisconsin; Madison, Wis.
- Dr. Anthony Chatwin, Conservation Law Foundation; Boston, Mass.
- Dr. Michael Cruickshank, Marine Minerals, Technology Center Associates; Honolulu, Hawaii
- Mr. Ernesto Diaz, Puerto Rico Coastal Zone Mgmt. Program; San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Ms. Carol Dinkins, Vinson & Elkins Attorneys At Law; Houston, Texas
- Dr. Rodney Fujita, Environmental Defense; Oakland, Calif.
- Dr. Dolores Garza, University of Alaska; Ketchikan, Alaska
- Mr. Eric Gilman, National Audubon Society; Honolulu, Hawaii

- Dr. Mark Hixon, Oregon State University; Corvallis, Ore.
- Mr. George Lapointe, Maine Department of Marine Resources; Augusta, Maine
- Dr. Bonnie McCay, Rutgers University; New Brunswick, N.J.
- Mr. Melvin E. Moon, Jr., Quileute Natural Resources Department; LaPush, Wash.
- Mr. Robert Moran, American Petroleum Institute, Washington, D.C.
- Dr. Steven Murray, California State University; Fullerton, Calif.
- Mr. Michael Nussman, American Sportfishing Association; Alexandria, Va.
- Dr. John Ogden, Florida Institute of Oceanography; St. Petersburg, Fla.
- Mr. Terry O'Halloran, hulaRez Inc.; Kalaheo, Hawaii
- Mr. Lelei Peau, Dept. of Commerce of American Samoa Pago Pago; American Samoa
- Dr. Walter Pereyra, Arctic Storm Management Group, Inc.; Seattle, Wash.
- Mr. Max Peterson, International Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Washington, D.C.
- Mr. Gilbert Radonski, Sport Fishing Institute; Cape Carteret, N.C.
- Mr. James Ray, Environmental Ecology and Response Shell Global Solutions (U.S.)Inc.; Houston, Texas
- Ms. Barbara Stevenson, Portland Fish Exchange; Portland, Maine
- Dr. Daniel Suman, University of Miami; Miami, Fla.
- Capt. Thomas E. Thompson, USCG (Ret.), International Council of Cruise Lines; Arlington, Va.
- Ms. H. Kay Williams, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Vancleave, Miss.
- Mr. Robert Zales, II, Bob Zales Charters; Panama City, Fla.

Committee members were nominated by organizations and individuals. Potential members are offered membership into the committee and then must undergo a background check. These candidates were selected by a panel of experts from both agencies seeking to ensure that the committee's membership represented the broad spectrum of interested parties throughout the nation.

NOAA is dedicated to exploring, understanding, conserving and restoring the nation's coasts and oceans. NOAA Ocean Service balances environmental protection with economic prosperity in fulfilling its mission of promoting safe navigation, supporting coastal communities, sustaining coastal habitats and mitigating coastal hazards. NOAA Fisheries ensures the sustainable use of marine fishery resources, protects marine mammal and sea turtle populations, and promotes the health of coastal and offshore marine habitats.

Marine protected areas are one of several management tools NOAA Fisheries uses to prevent decline and promote recovery of marine fish, mammal and sea turtle species that fall under the agency's stewardship responsibilities. In partnership with the eight regional fishery management councils, NOAA Ocean Service, states, fishermen, and coastal communities, NOAA Fisheries combines protected areas with other marine resource management tools to ensure a healthy and bountiful ocean for all Americans.

The Department of the Interior is the nation's principal conservation agency. Interior serves as the steward for approximately 426 million acres of America's public land, representing about 19 percent of the U.S. land surface and 66 percent of all federally owned land. Interior also manages mineral development on the 1.48 billion acre U.S. outer continental shelf. Interior's National Park Service currently manages 385 parks and serves about 285 million visitors. Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary federal agency responsible for the protection, conservation, and renewal of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, and manages 538 refuges and 37 wetland management

districts throughout the U.S.

For more information online:

Department of Commerce - <http://www.commerce.gov>

NOAA - <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Ocean Service - <http://www.nos.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries - <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

National Marine Protected Areas Center - <http://www.mpa.gov>

Department of the Interior - <http://www.doi.gov>

National Park Service - <http://www.nps.gov>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - <http://www.fws.gov>

Minerals Management Service - <http://www.mms.gov>

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