

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
PLANNING FOR FEDERAL WATERS PORTION OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY

Mr. Chris Mobley and Mr. Sean Hastings briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) regarding initiation of the process to create reserves in federal waters of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS). There are no new technical issues to discuss at the present time; however, the Council has an opportunity to consider how it plans to participate in the process.

According to their time table CINMS intends to spend June through November 2003 preparing the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). Public comment on scoping for the DEIS is open until July 23. The final product is currently scheduled for December, but this may not be a realistic deadline.

The CINMS is seeking Council assistance in streamlining the environmental review. The SSC reminded CINMS staff that we have serious concerns with the Net Assessment and have provided detailed comments to the Council and CINMS. Substantial work needs to be done to meet federal regulatory requirements.

Mr. Mobley suggested the Council could draft three or four alternative sets of regulations prior to completion of an acceptable DEIS. The SSC is concerned that this could put the Council in a vulnerable position *vis a vis* the regulatory requirements, particularly if the drafting of regulations is viewed as a recommendation made in the absence of an adequate DEIS. This highlights the need for defensible analyses from CINMS if the Council is to participate as a partner in the process.

Mr. Hastings requested guidance for bringing the existing documents and analysis up to standard. The SSC has already provided two review documents (November 2001, June 2002) pointing out specific deficiencies in the existing analysis and providing specific recommendations to address these shortcomings. With Council direction, and if requested by CINMS, the chair of the SSC Marine Reserves Subcommittee is willing to provide further clarification of the SSC review comments. As a review body, the SSC is not in a position to actively participate in revision of the analysis.

PFGC
06/18/03