



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL OCEANIC SERVICE

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
299 Foam Street  
Monterey, California 93940

Agenda Item C.2.b  
Attachment 1  
September 2009

August 26, 2009

Mr. David Ortmann, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Pl, Suite 101  
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Ortmann:

This letter and subsequent presentation at the September 2009 Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meeting provides the PFMC with an update on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's (MBNMS or Sanctuary) plans for considering marine protected areas (MPAs) in federal waters of the Sanctuary. Your July 2008 letter provided some encouraging feedback and suggestions on how to move forward. We have also received guidance and advice from our Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC), NOAA Fisheries, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), PFMC staff, and the National MPA Center on approaches for a collaborative and integrated MPA process. We have carefully considered all this advice and incorporated it into our draft MPA planning process.

The MBNMS believes a healthy sanctuary ecosystem supports sustainable uses, economies, and coastal communities. This belief embodies our core mandate to protect marine ecosystems, which is reflected in the three objectives we articulated for MPAs in the federal waters of the Sanctuary:

1. Protecting unique and rare areas for future generations;
2. Protecting areas where natural ecosystem components are maintained and/or restored; and
3. Establishing research areas to differentiate between natural variation versus human impacts to ecological processes and components.

As we move forward with a process for considering MPAs, we recognize the value of a collaborative process that attempts to integrate the management objectives of our key partners and moves us collectively towards a more comprehensive ecosystem-based management for the Sanctuary, which may also benefit the larger regional ecosystem.

Taking into consideration the input we have sought and received over the past year, I want to clarify how our MPA planning will be taking a more comprehensive ecosystem-based management approach. We will work to consider and incorporate a range of objectives identified by our agency partners and stakeholders that are potentially



compatible with the MBNMS MPA objectives. Examples of these management objectives, identified during individual consultations with interagency partners, and others include:

- Implementing and monitoring the state MPAs within MBNMS;
- Identifying economically viable and creative ways to reduce impacts of fishing on benthic habitat within MBNMS;
- Determining modifications to essential fish habitat (EFH) closures within MBNMS and/or along the Central Coast;
- Developing an Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan or Fishery Ecosystem Plan with PFMC;
- Establishing economically and ecologically viable community-based fisheries within MBNMS and/or along the Central Coast;
- Establishing Community Fishing Associations along the central coast to utilize community-based catch shares for groundfish; and
- Developing a sustainable fisheries certification program for fisheries conducted within MBNMS and/or along the Central Coast;

A variety of promising and opportune tools and approaches are emerging in support of an integrated ecosystem-management system for the Sanctuary. One such tool is NOAA's Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME). MBNMS is currently participating on an interagency team with the Northwest and Southwest Fishery Science Centers and Regional Offices in the development of the IEA's FY10 work plan. Under the leadership and direction of the Science centers, we anticipate the IEA process to produce evaluations of a range of interagency management scenarios aimed at achieving a healthy Sanctuary ecosystem that are supportive of sustainable uses and communities. We also are looking to the IEA to help inform how the Sanctuary's MPA needs can be met within a larger collaborative process. It is our understanding that NOAA anticipates providing a briefing of the CCLME IEA process at the November 2009 PFMC meeting.

For the MBNMS MPA effort to be successful, we need the active participation, support and assistance from our agency partners at NOAA Fisheries, the MBNMS SAC, and stakeholders, including the PFMC and its Science and Statistical Committee. The expert advice and scientific input from these partners is critical to our process and we look forward to engaging each in our efforts.

Your July 2008 letter identified two analytical needs that the IEA is suited to address. An early step in the IEA process is the development and testing of indicators that reflect ecosystem attributes of interest. This step may also inform the development of specific evaluation criteria for the MPA objectives articulated by the MBNMS. Additionally, the IEA may prove useful in evaluating existing and proposed management measures within the Sanctuary to ascertain what modifications or additions are necessary to meet the Sanctuary's goals and objectives.

We acknowledge and thank the PFMC for its advice and technical expertise on this issue and past management actions on the west coast in consideration of the special nature of national marine sanctuaries. We look forward to building on the successes that we have already achieved through collaboration, hard work and constructive dialogue. If Council members or staff have any questions, please contact me or Mike Eng on my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Michel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "M".

Paul Michel  
Sanctuary Superintendent