



# Proposed Designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary



**PFMC Members, Advisory Body Members, and the Public - August 24, 2023**





# Immediate Next Steps



- **Roll Out Initiated Today, August 24**
- **Released Designation Materials on August 24, 2023; Comment Period Opens August 25, 2023 and Closes October 25, 2023**
- **Public Information Workshops**
  - Sept. 11, 12 (in person) and Sept. 15 (virtual)
- **Public Comment Hearings/Meetings**
  - Sept. 25, 27 (in person) and Oct. 12 (virtual)
- **Designation Materials Consist of:**
  - Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which includes terms of designation (required by NMSA) and proposed regulations
  - Draft management plan
  - Draft environmental impact statement

# CHNMS Designation Timeline



## Step 1:

- Nov 2021: NOAA initiated designation process
- Dec 2021 – Jan 2022: Public scoping meetings were held (virtually)

## Step 2:

- Feb 2022 – Present: Review of public comments, host workshops, meetings, and preparation and clearance of draft designation documents

## Step 3: (Current Step)

- **August 24-25, 2023: NOAA releases draft designation documents, opens public comment period**
- **October 25, 2023: Public comment period ends**
- **Through ONMS consultation requirement, will accept PFMC comments in November**

## Step 4:

- Throughout 2023 into 2024: NOAA will prepare responses to comments, and finalize designation documents

## Step 5:

- Target – First half of 2024: If NOAA decides to complete the designation, will then publish final designation documents

## Step 6:

- Target – Mid-2024: Designation complete



# Purpose of the Proposed Action



***Action:** Designate a national marine sanctuary in the coastal and offshore waters of central California*

- **Manage and increase protection of** nationally-significant biological, cultural, and historical resources through a regulatory and non-regulatory framework
- **Guide** comprehensive ecosystem-based, community-based management to address myriad threats to these resources
- **Recognize and aid** public awareness of Indigenous tribal heritage and culture in the area. **Incorporate** traditional knowledge and **facilitate** tribal collaborative management.

# Need for the Proposed Action



- **Area is important ecological transition zone with high biological productivity; important habitat to many endangered species**
  - Supports dense aggregations of marine life, including nationally significant biodiversity of sea birds, marine mammals, invertebrates, and fishes
  - Upwelling that nourishes important ecosystems down current



# Need for the Proposed Action



- Area contains hundreds of shipwrecks of historical importance
- Region has been home to coastal, ocean-going Indigenous tribes for tens of thousands of years
  - Submerged village sites may exist along paleoshorelines





# Need for the Proposed Action

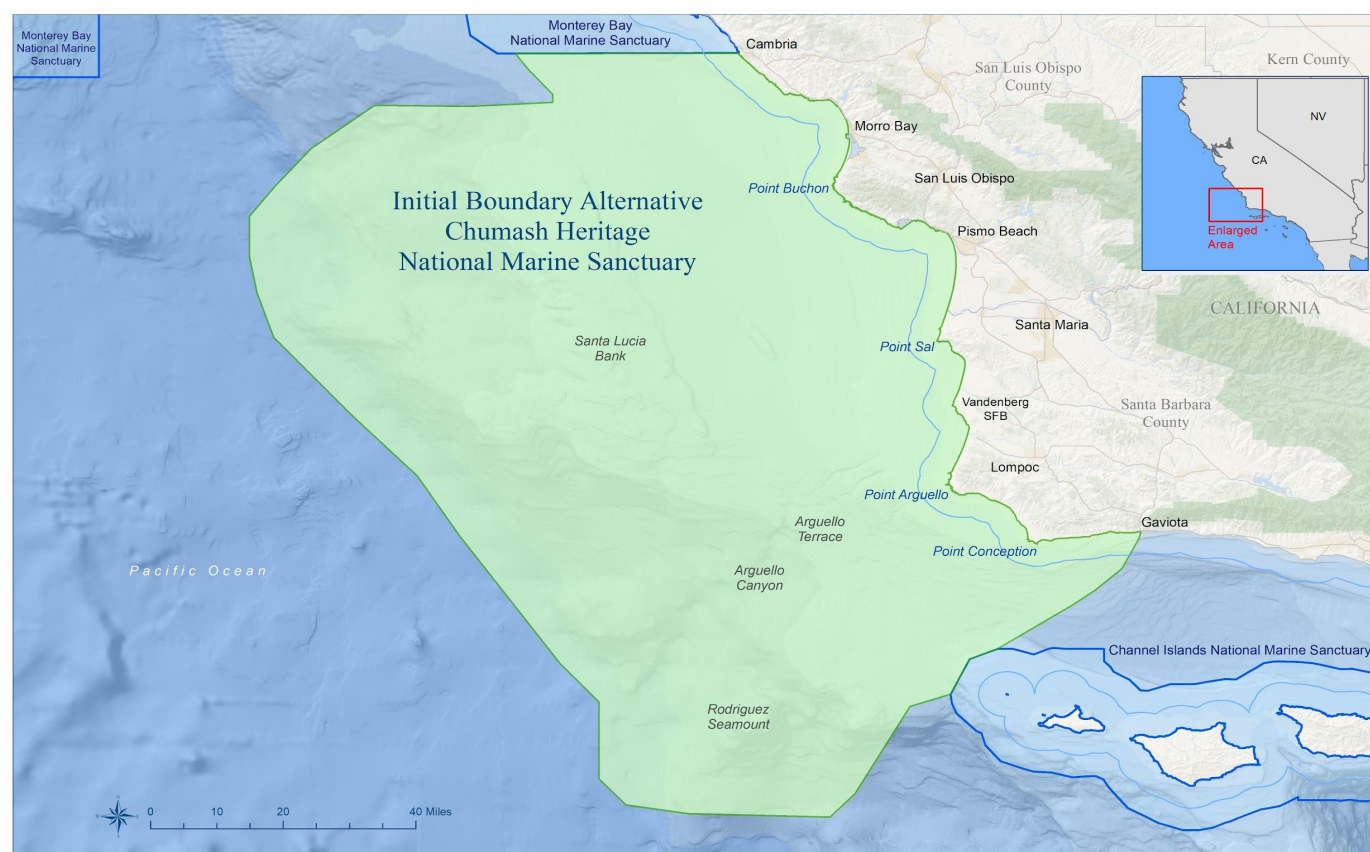


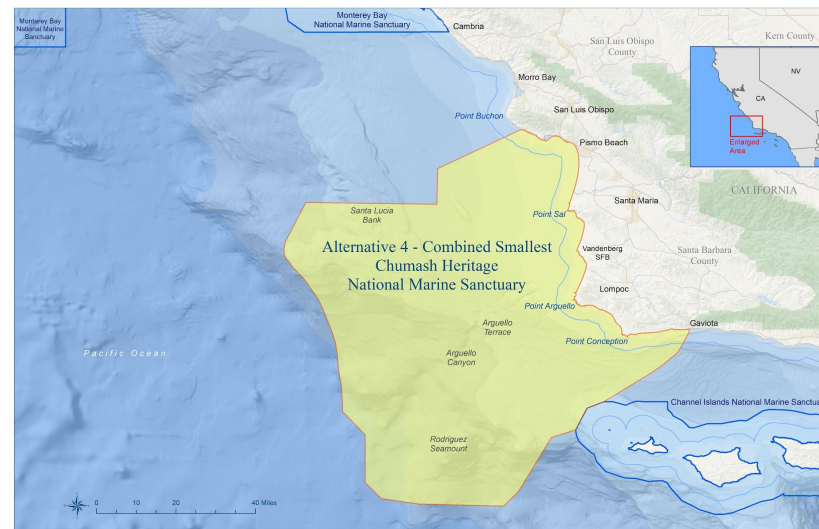
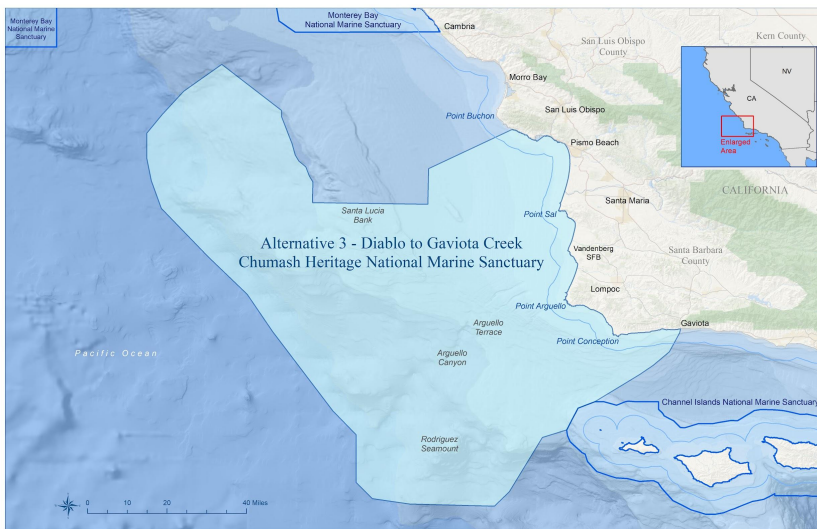
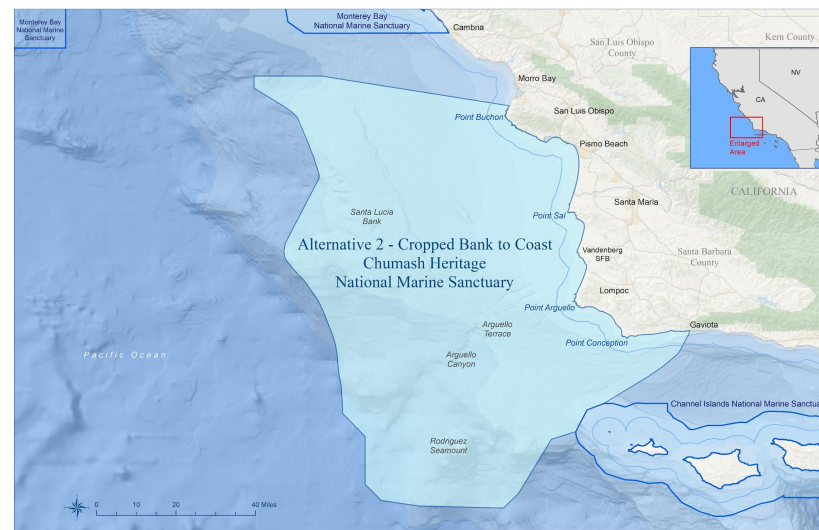
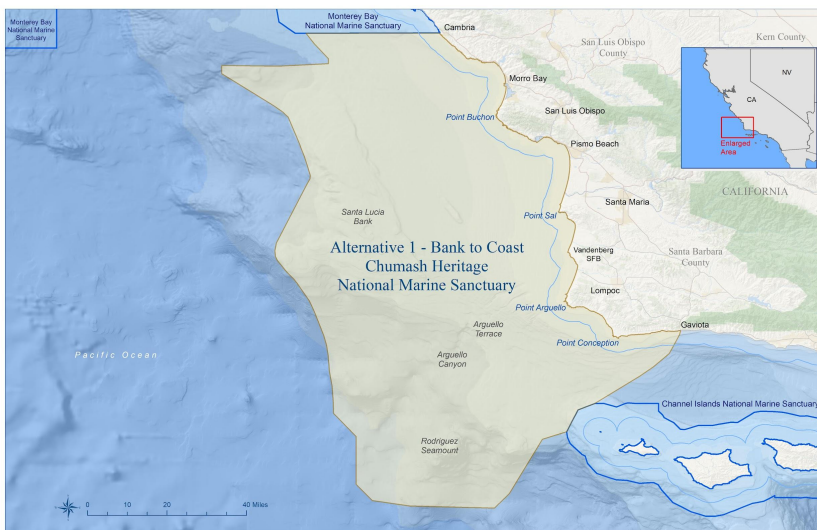
- **Additional protections are needed due to myriad ongoing and emerging threats to the area from human uses and climate change**
  - Offshore energy development
    - Oil and gas
    - Offshore wind
  - Pollution (offshore and onshore sources)
  - Increased vessel traffic and transportation
  - Increased coastal development
  - Climate change



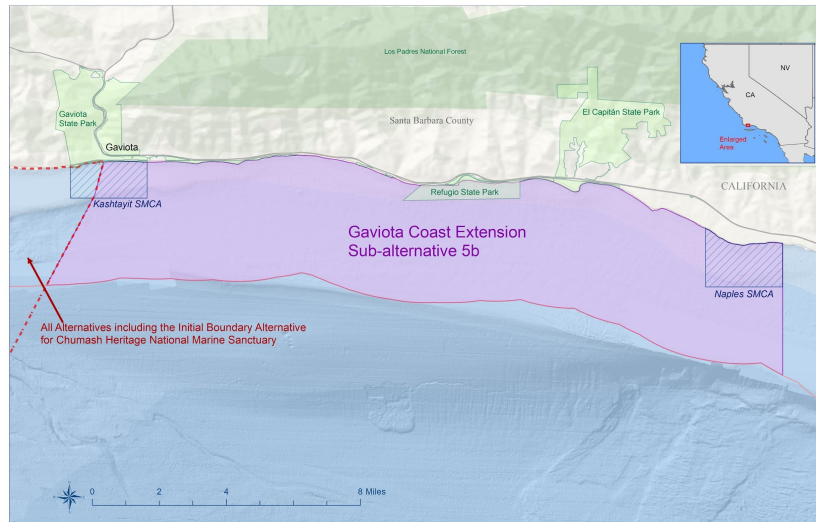
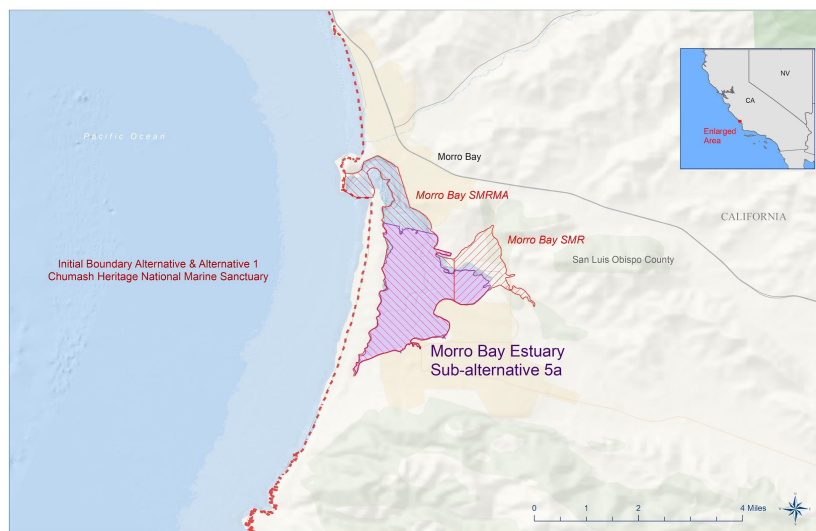


# Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) Designation









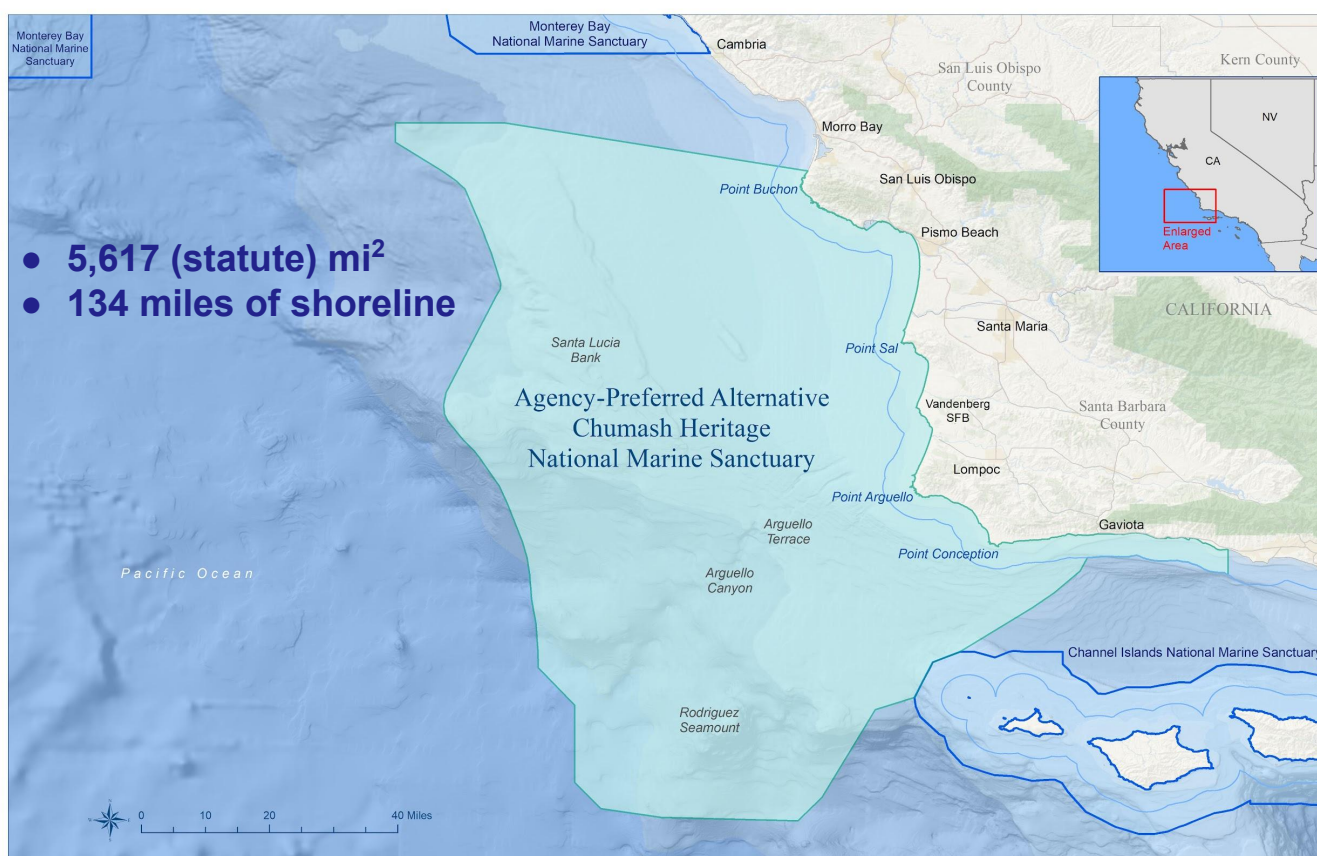
## Alternatives - Expanded Protection Areas Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

## 5b

### Gaviota Coast Extension



# Agency-Preferred Alternative

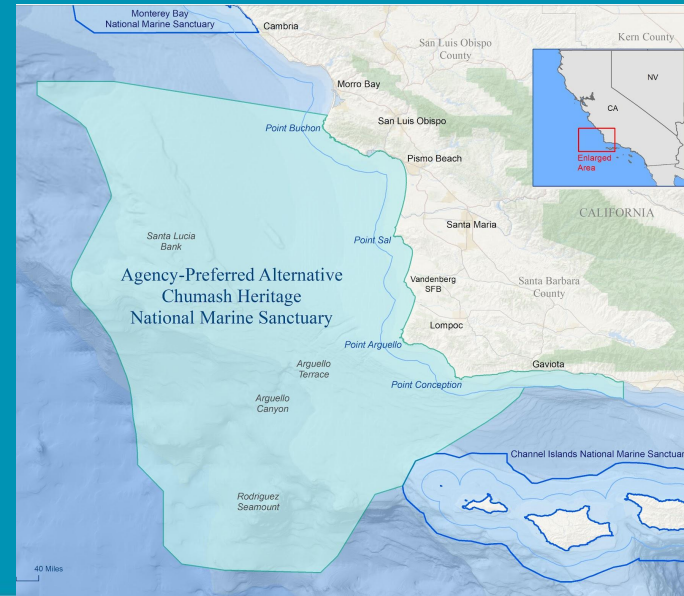


- 5,617 (statute) mi<sup>2</sup>
- 134 miles of shoreline

# Reasons for Agency-Preferred Alternative



- Focus management on core areas and resources requiring conservation
  - Santa Lucia Bank (including Rodriguez Seamount & Arguello Canyon) to coast
  - Nearshore reefs, kelp forests, sandy and rocky shorelines, shipwrecks, potential paleoshorelines, resources important to tribes and Indigenous communities
  - Indigenous cultural resources along the Gaviota Coast
- Construction impacts from laying up to 30 subsea electrical transmission cables between wind leases and Morro Bay is anticipated to be too substantial to allow in a national marine sanctuary
- Ameliorates concerns raised by Salinan tribal bands regarding naming their shared historical areas “Chumash” (from Cambria to south of Morro Bay)



# Proposed Regulations



- App. a dozen ***proposed regulations*** are similar to other California national marine sanctuaries including ***exceptions*** to prohibited activities; e.g., discharges and seabed disturbance
- Standard ***permit processes*** would be included to allow NOAA to consider activities otherwise prohibited - sanctuary general permit; special use permit; ONMS authorization; and certification
  - Would allow for permitting of subsea electrical transmission cables to shore in a manner consistent with how NOAA has permitted trans-oceanic fiber-optic cables
- ***Exemption*** for DoD's existing activities and a process whereby ONMS Director can approve new DoD activities. Also includes regulatory exception for U.S. Coast Guard discharges.
- Do not include any fishing regulations

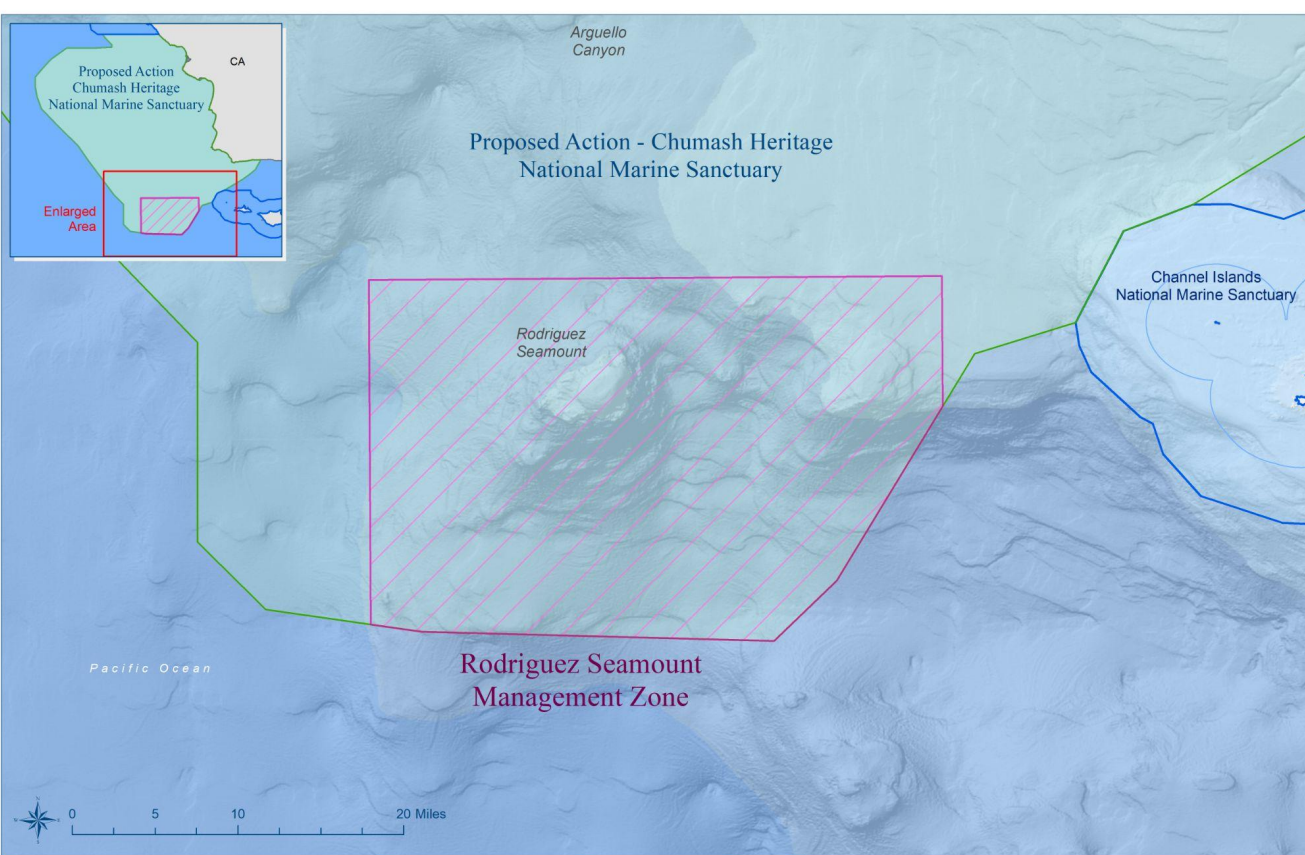


# Proposed Prohibited Activities



- Oil and gas development other than from existing platforms & reservoirs
- Discharges - within or into; beyond that enters and injures; from a cruise ship
- Disturbance of the submerged lands
- Take, disturbance, removal, or possession of a maritime heritage resource
- Take or possession of a marine mammal, sea turtle, or bird
- Deserting a vessel or leaving harmful matter aboard a deserted vessel
- Attracting a white shark
- Special protections for Rodriguez Seamount below 1,500 ft (excluding fishing)
- Introducing an introduced species (other than striped bass / catch and release)
- Interfering with an enforcement action

# Rodriguez Seamount Management Zone



- Management zone to overlay the Rodriguez Seamount and adjacent seafloor structures to enhance management of nationally significant resources
- Prohibit disturbing resources deeper than 1,500 ft within the Rodriguez Seamount Management Zone, other than from fishing activities, with limited exceptions
- Applicable to all action alternatives, including the Agency-Preferred Alternative

# Focus of Draft Management Plan



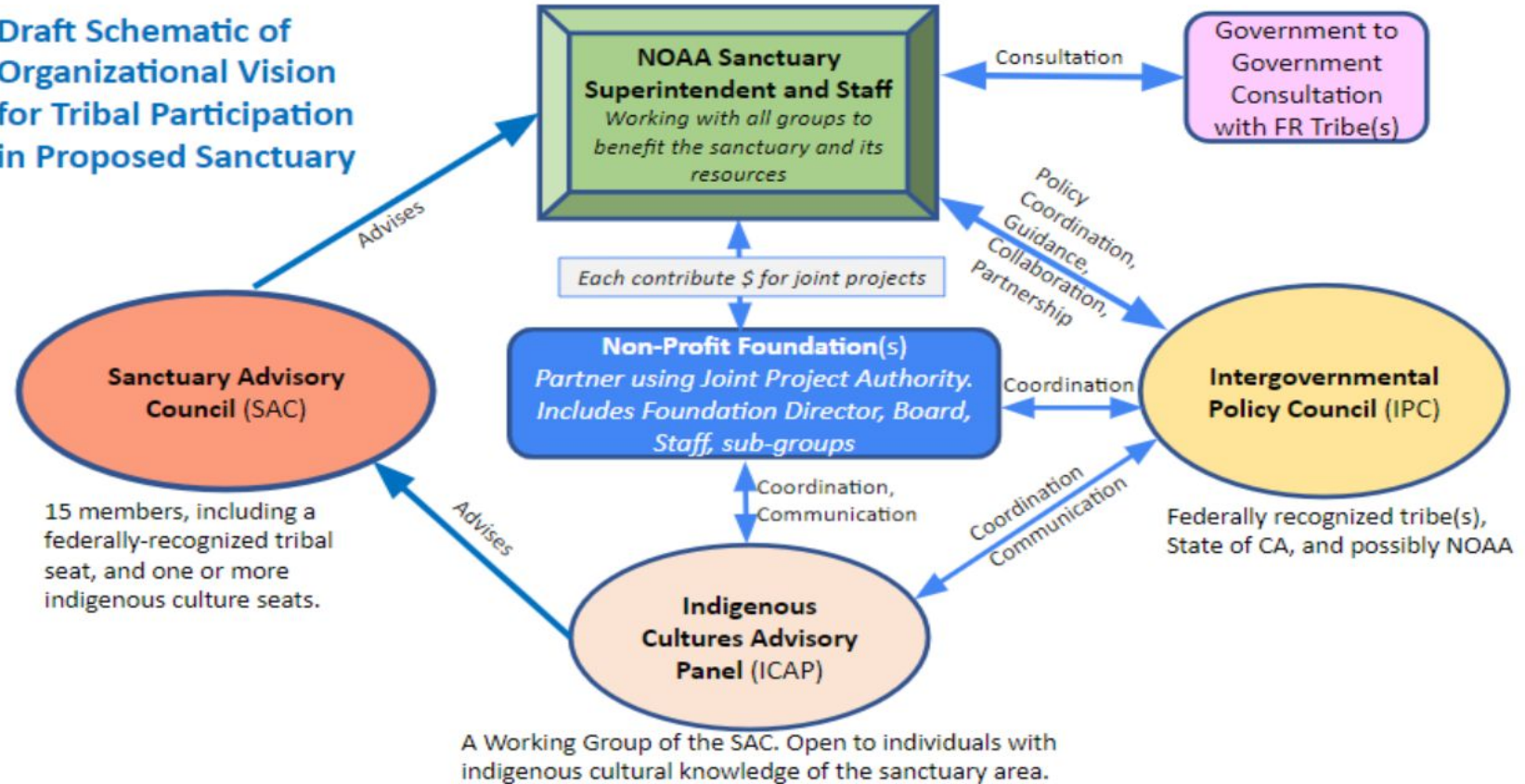
**Action Plans, each contain separate strategies and activities;  
present non-regulatory programs for the new sanctuary:**

- Indigenous Cultural Heritage
- Climate Change
- Offshore Energy
- Blue Economy
- Education and Outreach
- Research and Monitoring
- Maritime Heritage
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Disturbance
- Resource Protection
- Operations and Admin



# Framework for Tribal Collaborative Management

Draft Schematic of  
Organizational Vision  
for Tribal Participation  
in Proposed Sanctuary



# Economic Analysis



- **Benefits: Maintain ecosystem services provided by a healthy ecosystem**
  - Maintain productive fisheries
  - Promote tourism and recreation
  - New users may boost economic activity
- **Costs: No significant impact**
  - Operating budget dependent on congressional appropriations
  - Minimal costs associated with regulations - operators can obtain a permit and/or operate outside of the sanctuary



# Alignment with Administration Priorities



- **America the Beautiful and the Joint Secretarial order on Tribal Co-Stewardship**
  - Collaborative and inclusive
  - Conserve for the benefit of all
  - Support locally-led efforts
  - Honor tribal sovereignty and promote Indigenous collaborative management
  - Pursue approaches that create jobs
  - Use science as a guide
  - Build on existing tools and strategies

## Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful

*A preliminary report to the National Climate Task Force recommending a ten-year, locally led campaign to conserve and restore the lands and waters upon which we all depend, and that bind us together as Americans.*







## Map of Agency-Preferred Alternative and Existing National Marine Sanctuaries off California



# Questions & Discussion

**Proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary website**  
<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/chumash-heritage/>