

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- May 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: May 12, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, 500 W. Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Andrew Augustyn, John Bright, Stephanie Gandulla, Randy Gilmer, Jeff Gray, Russ Green, Joe Hoyt, Joey Jackson, Nick Myers, Caleb O'Brien, Jean Prevo, Maddie Roth, Sarah Waters

State of Michigan: Wayne Lusardi

NEMI/GLSI: n/a

SAC Members: Roger Baumgardner, Don Gilmet, Nancy Kinney, Steve Kroll, Dan Mitchell, Melissa Olsen, Ann-Marie Ruder, Carol Shafto, Chuck Wiesen

SAC Alternates: Mike Beaulac, Rick Houchin, Bob Krafft, Pat Labadie, RC Laugal, Merl Melton

Non-voting Members: Al Moe

United States Coast Guard: n/a

Media: n/a

Public: n/a

WELCOME AND ACTION ITEMS:

Steve Kroll called the meeting to order. The council reviewed and approved the minutes from the March 22, 2022 council meeting.

Recruitment is happening for the following seats that are expiring:

- Citizen-at-Large – Chuck Wiesen & Mike Beaulac
- Education (higher education) – Don MacMaster
- Fishing (recreational, charter, and/or commercial) – Jason Snyder & Ron Meneghel
- Maritime Industry/Business – Tom Rayburn & Pay Labadie
- Tourism/Recreation – Melissa Olsen

Applications for these seats are due **May 30, 2022**. If your seat is on the list and you have served in that seat for three consecutive terms you cannot apply for that seat again. You are welcome to apply for another one if it fits your constituency. If you are interested in reapplying or if you have questions, please contact jean.prevo@noaa.gov or visit <https://thunderbay.noaa.gov/involved/recruitment.html>.

SANCTUARY UPDATE:

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center - After being closed due to COVID since March 2020, the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center (GLMHC) was able to reopen on April 21, 2022. The GLMHC will be open seven days a week starting May 5, 2022. The GLMHC is currently the only visitor center open in the sanctuary system, some may open later this summer.

During the first week of being open, 150 students from Lincoln Elementary School and a class from Alpena High School both visited the GLMHC.

Thunder Bay Maritime Festival – After lengthy discussions and a lot of thought, it has been decided that the festival will not be happening this year. The first priority was getting the visitor center open and then getting the regular programming back up and running. Once that happens we will look at reinstating the bigger events. Even though the festival isn't happening the GLMHC will be open on July 4th and the *Lady Michigan* will be doing cruises. Steve Kroll would like to put this on a later meeting agenda to discuss the possibility of other groups coming in to help with the planning and running of the festival. Thunder Bay staff is working on a public statement to send out about cancellation of the festival.

Festival of Sail, July 15-17th – The tall ships *Pride of Baltimore*, *Niagara*, and *Trinidad* along with the world's largest rubber duck will be visiting Alpena July 15-17, 2022. This ticketed event is being put on by a private company but is being held on our grounds. The sanctuary is working on special youth events to get them on the vessels and also potentially getting a community discount. According to the event company this event usually draws people from 4-8 hours away which would be good for the sanctuary and Alpena businesses.

Lady Michigan – The *Lady Michigan* has begun its season with four cruises for the Viking cruise ship passengers on May 4. Sunday, May 15 begins the *Lady Michigan's* first public cruises. Student cruises will be happening until the end of the school year on June 9.

Viking Expedition – In January 2020, NOAA and Viking Expeditions [announced](#) a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement to foster science integration onboard Viking ships in the Great Lakes at three levels: core research and long-term studies, science education, and citizen science. The Great Lakes Environmental Lab have the lead on the partnership for NOAA, but we have been very involved.

TBNMS has proposed a number of research opportunities within this framework, including ROV and submersible exploration/documentation of shipwreck sites and geological formations (sinkholes) within the sanctuary, bathymetric mapping within the sanctuary, citizen science projects, and education and outreach programs. These proposals have been well-received by the Viking Science Team and are expected to come to fruition throughout the next few years, including 2022, Viking's inaugural season in the Great Lakes.

In addition to expanding sanctuary science and research efforts, this private-public partnership will have a nice impact on tourism in Alpena, as the [*Viking Octantis*](#) will be disembarking in Alpena eight times this season. Not only do we have the potential to reach thousands who will physically sail through sanctuary waters, but we will also have access to a new global audience of ocean and Great Lakes advocates. We are confident that there will be opportunities for other sites in the region.

On May 4, 2022 the *Viking Octantis* had its first visit to Alpena and the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center. TBNMS received great feedback from the passengers that visited. During their stop in Alpena 400 passengers toured the visitor center, 320 passengers took a shipwreck tour onboard the *Lady Michigan* and 15 passengers toured the Nature Conservancy's North Point property with Al Moe. Passengers also had the option of doing other tours around Alpena. Overall the first visit went very well but it will get better. Viking has mentioned tripling their visits to Alpena next year.

Mooring Buoys – The staff has a goal every year to get all of the mooring buoys deployed by Memorial Day. So far, 25 buoys have been deployed. All the Rogers City, Presque Isle and buoys for the *Lady Michigan* cruises have been deployed. There are only 16 left to get in the water, so the staff is on track to get them all installed by Memorial Day.

Ocean Exploration Project – The last week of May through the first week of June, Thunder Bay NMS will be working on an Office of Exploration project with the University of Michigan. The project is focused on training AUVs and ROVs to automatically detect shipwreck sites. Sanctuary staff will provide an update on this project at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.

2022 TBNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

August 2
September 20
November 8