

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- September 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: September 20, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Attendees

NOAA: Andrew Augustyn, Stephanie Gandulla, Jeff Gray, Joey Jackson, Jean Prevo, Cassandra Sadler, Kimberly Schultz, Sarah Waters

State of Michigan: n/a

NEMI/GLSI: n/a

SAC Members: Don Gilmet, Nancy Kinney, Don Newport, Ann-Marie Ruder, Chuck Wiesen

SAC Alternates: Mike Beaulac, R.C. Laugal, Tim Lee, Merl Melton, Dan Mitchell, Karol Walchak

Non-voting Members: Al Moe, Beach Hall

United States Coast Guard: n/a

Media: n/a

Public: Janet Knisley-Simons, Don LaBarre, Adam Poll

WELCOME AND ACTION ITEMS:

Chuck Wiesen (filling in for chair and vice-chair) called the meeting to order. The council reviewed and approved the minutes from the August 2, 2022 council meeting.

The recruitment period for the below seats is complete and applications are being reviewed and vetted. The council members should be in place by the November meeting.

- Citizen-at-Large
- Education (higher education)
- Fishing (recreational, charter, and/or commercial)
- Maritime Industry/Business
- Tourism/Recreation

CONDITION REPORT:

Sanctuary staff will be working to complete an updated condition report in 2023. The last condition report was done in 2013. The condition report is one tool employed to assess the condition of sanctuary resources. The report provides a standardized summary of resources, drivers and pressures on those resources, and current conditions and trends for resources and ecosystem services. It also describes existing management responses to pressures that threaten the integrity of the marine environment.

The entire sanctuary team contributes to the information in the condition report. It is a useful tool when completing the Management Plan Review.

The 2013 condition report can be found [here](#).

GRECIAN & NORMAN RESEARCH:

East Carolina University graduate student Caleb O'Brien will be presenting his thesis study "The Archaeological Site Formation of *Norman* and *Grecian*" on Thursday, September 22 at 7pm. This presentation is a kickoff to the Sanctuary Lecture series. Stay tuned for more lecture dates and details.

THUNDER BAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:

The 11th Annual Thunder Bay International Film Festival is January 25-29, 2023. The main festival will be in-person at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, but there will also be a virtual option like last year starting on February 1-5, 2023. The festival will have over 100 ocean and great lakes films. The student competition will not be held this year; however, staff is working on a curated package of films to bring to the schools for student programming.

Stephanie Gandulla gave a sneak peak of some of the films that will be shown at the 2023 festival. There will be a volunteer sign up sheet at the November 8, 2022, council meeting.

SANCTUARY UPDATE:

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center (GLMHC) - There have been approximately 45,000 visitors at the GLMHC since we opened in May. Although this number is less than summers in the past, the sanctuary didn't host some annual events and also didn't do any of the normal marketing. The main focus this spring and summer was getting the building open, then moving onto the bigger programming.

Daniel Moffat has been leading some education programs and student field trips. These include glass bottom boat tours and students working with ROVs in the dive tank. There are more field trips scheduled for this fall which will hopefully include some trips out to the North Point Preserve. The sanctuary's goal is to make connections across all grade levels and counties. There was a school from Alcona County at the sanctuary today.

The sanctuary's evening programming is also starting back up, with the Thursday Sanctuary Lecture series mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Trick or Treat at the Sanctuary, October 28th from 5pm-8pm - The sanctuary will be hosting the annual Halloween event on October 28th, Joey Jackson is the point person for the event. Please contact him at joey.jackson@noaa.gov if you are interested in volunteering or making a candy donation.

MATE ROV Competition May 2023 - Daniel Moffatt is working to get the MATE Regional ROV Competition back up and running. There will be more information on this event at a future meeting.

Upcoming Events –

September 22, 7pm: The Archaeological Site Formation of *Norman* and *Grecian*

October 20, 7pm: Great Lakes Fish Tugs

October 28, 5-7pm: Trick or Treat through the Haunted Ship

November 8: SAC Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation!

January 25-29, 2023: 11th annual Thunder Bay International Film Festival-IN PERSON!

January 30-February 12, 2023: Thunder Bay International Film Festival Virtual

April 13, 2023 at 7pm: Harmful Algal Blooms and Freshwater Acidification

May 2023: Great Lakes Regional MATE ROV Competition

There could be some added live stream events popping up, we will keep you updated as those get scheduled.

November 8th is the next advisory council meeting. Following the meeting there will be a volunteer appreciation event to celebrate the council members and all of the sanctuary's volunteers.

Viking Cruises - The final Viking Cruise of the 2022 season is next Tuesday, September 27. The council was encouraged to come to the GLMHC that day to experience what a cruise ship day is like at the center. Staff continue to make the programming better with each visit. Also working on the programming for next year to accommodate the expanded tour schedule, which will include over 20 visits.

Feedback from visitors mentioned that it would be helpful to have a way to get more folks downtown. The Friends of TBNMS secured two grants from the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan to help acquire a passenger golf cart. The Friends hope to have the new golf cart in place by next Tuesday. Sanctuary staff are working with Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Downtown Development Authority and other local businesses to develop ideas on how to get more cruise guests out into the community. Currently, passengers are offered a variety of excursions (glass bottom boat and GLMHC tour, wine and beer tour, lighthouses, etc.) Working with Viking to try to expand these excursions further.

Feedback provided to Viking from the passengers was very positive with Alpena tying Milwaukee as the highest-ranking stop. When the ship runs into weather issues at Houghton Alpena has become their backup stop.

Riverfront Project - Jeff showed a sketch of the updated riverfront project which will include basketball courts, updated parking, a shelter by the *Lady Michigan* dock and a labyrinth. Friends of TBNMS and sanctuary staff have been working with the City of Alpena, Alpena Marc, the Chamber of Commerce and others to make the project come to fruition.

Research Update:

Sanctuary staff have started removing mooring buoys this week.

Dr. Elisa Merz traveled from Germany to work with sanctuary staff to collect a species of diatom that thrives in the bacterial mats found at the bottom of Middle Island Sinkhole. Nick Sachar from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries was able to do some filming during her project. Stephanie will email a link to the preview of the sinkhole film which will be shown at the film festival when it becomes available.

Stephanie shared the below comments from visiting researchers. The visiting researchers view the sanctuary as the entire community.

“Working with the sanctuary has been wonderful, particularly with the opportunities the sanctuary and its staff have offered my students. Undergraduate students from Texas had a fantastic time exploring the history and archaeology in the sanctuary but also appreciated learning about the cutting-edge research taking place there and the types of technologies being used. They often wear their Alpena and sanctuary hats and shirts to class in Texas!”

Dr. Ashley Lemke, University of Texas at Arlington

“The University of New Hampshire’s Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping marine robotics group has had the pleasure to collaborate with the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 2019 and 2021. It is no small endeavor to field several weeks of expedition, operating experimental robotic vessels for lakebed survey, at ranges exceeding 20 km from shore, in waters with heavy commercial shipping. It is difficult to express the gratitude we feel for the expertise, professionalism, hospitality, friendliness of the sanctuary staff to aid and guide our operations. We hold the experience, professional relationships and friendships from those expeditions in the highest regard.”

Val Schmidt, Robotics Engineer

“I cannot overstate how vital your welcoming attitude and sustained support has been to all good the science in the sanctuary we have had going on for two decades.”

Dr. Bopaiah Biddanda, Professor of Water Resources
Grand Valley State University

“I have found working in collaboration with the Sanctuary to be productive and rewarding, and look forward to expanding our collaborative efforts in the future. One particular benefit is the opportunity to interact with the myriad of other scientists and investigators that come to work in

the Sanctuary. This has led to unexpected synergies in our work and the opening of interesting new directions for research.”

Dr. John O'Shea, Curator of Great Lakes Archaeology/Professor of Anthropology
Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, University of Michigan

“The people there and in particular the divers were always welcoming and pushed themselves to get the samples we needed. Even in times of a pandemic, they made sure that my research on the other side of the world could continue and made last minute sample trips a reality. Fact is, without their collaboration and incredible support, my research would not be where it is today, and I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for making the seemingly impossible possible.”

Dr. Elisa Merz, Max Planck Institute

Media Update:

Continue to do the regular programming on local media and have also received some regional media including a story in Traverse Magazine that mentioned the sanctuary as a destination to bring families.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Al Moe spoke about the celebration of life that was held at the sanctuary for Capt. Spencer Cootware on August 21. Over 100 people attended. Spencer hailed from Naples, Florida but was in Alpena every summer. Spencer took the glass-bottom boat and its staff to a new level. Multiple people spoke about Spencer during the memorial. Spencer knew so many people in our community. Impactful eulogies were given by Andrew Augustyn and Matt Southwell. Spencer's image is on an Austin Brothers IPA beer can label. Spencer had convinced them to put a shipwreck on the label so in his honor they put his image on it.

Capt. Wayne had been filling on the *Lady Michigan*, Capt. Perry will step in for the remainder of this season. Capt. Wayne will be back to help out for the cruise ship dates.

Don Newport asked if there has been a record kept of all of the scientists that have been here over the years? Would be impressive to share with the public. Jeff – This is a great idea; the condition report does have some of that information. Could also envision having a cool map showing where people have come from.

Anne-Marie Ruder was talking to one of the deck crew from the tall ship *Niagra* when they were here. The crew member enjoyed her visit and said we had the best facilities for the women of any port of that they had visited. Best shower she had the whole cruise.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm.

2022 TBNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 6pm