

**Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Advisory Council
- August 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes-**

Date: August 15, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Attendees

NOAA & Affiliates: Stephanie Gandulla, Jeff Gray, Kim Gildner, Jean Prevo, Madalyn Saddler – Michigan Sea Grant Environmental Intern, Cassandra Sadler

State of Michigan: n/a

NEMI/GLSI: n/a

SAC Members: Roger Baumgardner, Timothy Lee, Nancy Kinney, Janet Knisley-Simons, Steve Kroll, Don Newport, Scott Parkham, Carol Shafto

SAC Alternates: Mike Beaulac, Mike Kelly, Robert Krafft, Pat Labadie, Al Moe, Ann-Marie Ruder, Chuck Wiesen

Non-voting Members: Beach Hall

United States Coast Guard: n/a

Media: n/a

Public: Jane Kroll

WELCOME AND ACTION ITEMS:

Steve Kroll called the meeting to order and introduced the following new members:

Scott Parkham – Diving

Mike Kelly – Citizen-at-Large - Alternate

The council reviewed and approved the minutes from the April 4, 2023 council meeting. Chuck Wiesen motioned and Don Newport seconded, the minutes were unanimously passed.

SAC CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR ELECTIONS

Steve Kroll called for nominations for the Chair position. Steve nominated Timothy Lee, Education representative. Ann-Marie Ruder seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Tim was unanimously elected Chair.

Steve Kroll called for nomination for the Vice-Chair position. Al Moe nominated Steve Kroll for Vice-Chair. Ann-Mari Ruder seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and all were in favor of Steve Kroll being elected Vice-Chair.

Steve thanked the council for his time as Chair and looks forward to working with Tim Lee.

There was a change to the original agenda. The Alpena High School ROV team was unable to make it to tonight's meeting, they will be here in October to give a full presentation.

Jeff spoke briefly about the fires on Maui. All of the staff and facilities are safe. The sanctuary staff in Hawaii have been helping with evacuation and mapping of the harbors.

FRESHWATER ACIDIFICATION – Madalyn Saddler – Northern Michigan University Undergrad and Michigan Sea Grant Environmental Intern

Maddy is a fourth-year undergraduate environmental science student at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan and a Michigan Sea Grant Environmental Intern. Maddy is an Alpena native and was first introduced to the Thunder Bay NMS in elementary school through field trips where she saw shipwrecks for the first time. She got scuba certified diving the sanctuary's shipwrecks and the summer after graduating high school she began working as a deckhand and tour guide on the *Lady Michigan*. These experiences helped develop her interest in environmental stewardship.

Maddy's role as a research intern has been working on the ongoing freshwater acidification monitoring project with Thunder Bay NMS, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) and Michigan Sea Grant. This project is gathering baseline data from six sites in the sanctuary to study freshwater acidification in Lake Huron. She has been assisting with the surface sampling portion by visiting the sites every two weeks and collecting three samples per site. The research team at Thunder Bay NMS has also helped gather samples. Samples are then shipped to Dr. Regan Errera at GLERL for testing. Dr. Errera processes the samples for measurements of total carbon, dissolved organic carbon, total alkalinity and pH. These water chemistry indicators will be able to tell us how acidification and climate change are affecting the Great Lakes. The data has not been returned to us yet, it is still being processed. Hoping to have some of the results this winter.

SANCTUARY UPDATE

Operation Frog Pond – Sanctuary staff participated in the "Operation Frog Pond" environmental/oil spill training exercise in Rogers City along with the U.S. Coast Guard and other partner agencies.

Middle Island Sinkhole – Science sampling is continuing on the bacterial mat that thrives at the bottom of the sinkhole. The sinkhole is approximately 75-80 feet deep.

Viking Cruise Ship – Thunder Bay NMS has hosted 15 visits this year, with five more to go. Twenty-four visits planned for next year. Thunder Bay also hosted the Viking Science team’s annual long-term planning meeting. The team loved their visit and plan to conduct more science in Thunder Bay. They were aware of the economic and science benefit of the ship, but after seeing our work here at Thunder Bay, they now want to do more education programs. The science team invited some local students on board the ship for a tour while they were here. Viking has also asked the Alpena ROV team to design and fabricate equipment to be used off the submarine in Antarctica. Hope to continue to engage local students with Viking.

Another opportunity that arose from the team’s meeting here, is career opportunities for residents of northeast Michigan. The operations team is looking to recruit folks to work on their ships here in the Great Lakes and internationally. The Viking crew is planning to come on shore to meet with high school and college students about job opportunities on board the ships – from science to entertainment, service, etc.

Silent Swarm – Thunder Bay NMS hosted Silent Swarm on the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center (GLMHC) campus for two weeks in July. This was the second year Thunder Bay has hosted this training activity. The exercise is run by the Navy but involved 31 different units from Department of Defense employees to defense contractors. Two hundred people per week participated each of the two weeks they were here. They extended it an additional week from last year’s one week exercise. The exercise is all electronic – warfare through communications and masking signals. It is all experimental using drones, underwater drones, surface vehicles, a blimp and people scattered throughout the bay. Thunder Bay NMS’s four research vessels were part of this operation, with the control center running out of the GLMHC. This training is good exposure for the sanctuary and provides a big economic impact on the downtown. At the end of this year’s training, it was decided that they will make this an ongoing project to be held here in Alpena at the GLMHC. Hospitality of the community played a big role in their decision to continue to hold it here.

The Alpena High School ROV team had the opportunity to meet with the Silent Swarm team. The training leaders and our staff will continue to look for ways to connect to our education programs.

Thunder Bay Maritime Festival of Sail – The festival was held July 21-23 at GLMHC, with over 3,000 people attending. The three-day event included the world’s largest rubber duck, a tall ship, research vessels, food vendors, Song of the Lakes and other live entertainment. The date for the 2024 festival has not been set but we are targeting July, waiting to hear from the tall ship coordinator when and what ships may be available. 2025 is the year of the tall ships in the Great Lakes so we are hoping to get some great ships that year.

Special Guests -

Paul Scholz, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management, visited Thunder Bay NMS on June 29.

Dr. Richard Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator, visited Thunder Bay NMS August 12-13.

Having both Dr. Spinrad and Paul Scholz visit in a short time was a massive opportunity. The leadership gets to see the work being done by Thunder Bay NMS and provide feedback. Both of them were blown away by their visits and commented that they've heard about all that is being done in Alpena but you don't actually understand it until you see it.

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation – The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation hosted their annual Board of Trustee's planning meeting at GLMHC August 12-15. Staff were able to meet the new foundation executive director Joel Johnson. Joel and the board are committed to doing more with sites and local friends' groups.

Thanks to everyone that helped during the visits. It was a unique opportunity to have the foundation board and Dr. Spinrad visit at the same time.

Education Programs:

Sanctuary staff hosted three summer programs:

Under Water Robot Academy

Wonderful Watershed

Outside and Unplugged – Four days outside and unplugged, no devices. Focus on enjoying all of the outdoor activities available in the sanctuary.

Partnering with the Boys and Girls Club to host members from the Saginaw Boys and Girls Club. Daniel will give an update on this program at the next meeting.

Don Newport mentioned the Starbase program held at the airbase that reaches 5th graders. Is there a way to join the sanctuary with their 5th graders? Jeff said he will ask Daniel to reach out to them.

Riverfront Project – The riverfront project is continuing, breaking ground on some of the bio-shed runoff projects. Also, working with Alpena Marc to get the parking lot done in the next few years along with a new entrance to the front door. The basketball court has been used non-stop since it has been put in. Hoping the use of the court will help drive the funding for the rest of the project. The sanctuary will be keeping our boats on the river instead of the marina for better, easier daily access.

Good Mid-Day Alpena Lunch – On August 10, the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce hosted their Good Mid-Day Alpena lunch on the roof deck at the GLMHC. Jeff was given the opportunity to speak to the group about the sanctuary and provide program updates.

Sanctuary Cinema – The Sanctuary Cinema opened in Mid-May. Before every movie our *Get Into Your Sanctuary* video promoting Thunder Bay NMS is played. Since the cinema has opened this video has been watched by 24,000 people.

Rogers City Nautical Festival – The sanctuary had a temporary exhibit in a building in Rogers City to promote the sanctuary. Thank you to Beach Hall and the Friends of TBNMS for helping make this happen.

New Sanctuary Sites Updates – Community and SAC members from other Great Lakes sites and Mallocks Bay NMS will be visiting Thunder Bay NMS next spring. Designation of Lake Ontario should be done soon, Lake Erie is at the beginning of designation.

Upcoming Events:

Sanctuary Lecture Series –

August 17 at 7:00pm – Exploring Shipwrecks of Thunder Bay presented by Chris Roxburgh

September 18 at 7:00pm – Vampires of the Great Lakes presented by Lauren Holbrook

Halloween - Trick or Treat at the Sanctuary – Stay tuned for more information on this event happening in October. If you would like to donate candy for the event, please bring it to the October meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Roger Baumgardner thanked everyone for his role as Vice-Chair and thanked Carol Shafto for nominating him.

ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

2023 TBNMS Advisory Council Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

October 17

December 12