

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NOAA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Committee Charge for the 2018 Term

Background

The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) will meet in San Francisco on January 17-19, 2018, to begin addressing its new charge from the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior. The three elements of the charge are summarized below.

MPA FAC Charge

1. Thriving MPAs in the US: Sustaining Benefits, Meeting Challenges, and Seizing Opportunities into the Future

What: The MPA FAC will: (a) identify benefits, accomplishments, and emerging issues among federal, state, territorial, and tribal MPAs in US waters; and, (b) recommend strategies to enable agencies and stakeholders to address new challenges and opportunities and strengthen effective management of the nation’s MPAs.

Why: MPAs are proven and effective tools for conserving marine and Great Lakes ecosystems and for providing services to coastal communities and the nation as a whole. Ensuring that those societal benefits continue to grow is increasingly critical and challenging as our oceans – and the expectations of stakeholders – continue to evolve. The MPA FAC can help America’s MPAs navigate those changes to ensure that the benefits of MPAs are enjoyed by generations to come.

How: The Committee should organize its deliberations about benefits, accomplishments, and emerging issues around several core objectives common to most MPAs. These could include: supporting robust coastal economies and communities; maintaining healthy and productive ecosystems; engaging diverse communities and constituencies; valuing maritime cultural heritage; responding to natural disasters; and, understanding and exploring our changing oceans. The Committee’s final products should include a brief report of its findings and recommendations for MPA agencies, accompanied by a summary infographic aimed at a wide audience of decision-makers, practitioners, and stakeholders.

2. Strengthening National Coastal Resilience through MPAs

What: The MPA FAC will: (a) document qualities of MPAs that contribute to resilient coastal ecosystems, economies, and societies; and, (b) develop recommendations that help MPA agencies effectively design and adaptively manage MPAs and MPA networks for ecological and social resilience inside and outside their boundaries.

Why: Resilience is the ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand — and rapidly recover from — disruption. Coping with such changes is an increasing component of successful MPA management. When effectively designed and integrated into wider ocean and coastal governance, MPAs can provide benefits to, and increase the resilience of, nearby ecosystems, coastal communities, and beyond. However, the benefits of MPAs and the role they play for such resilience is not widely understood. The MPA FAC can draw on the expertise of its membership to help identify where and how these benefits already occur, and how MPAs can be managed to enhance the benefit of resilient MPAs in the future.

How: The Committee should organize its investigations around: (a) key benefits of MPA-generated resilience (e.g. ecological, fisheries, infrastructure, tourism); (b) important emerging threats to coastal areas that MPAs can help mitigate through enhanced resilience (e.g. storms, waves, flooding, species range changes, invasive species); and, (c) strategies for enabling greater resilience through well-designed and managed MPAs. The Committee's final products should include a report of its findings and recommendations for MPA agencies, accompanied by a summary infographic for a wide audience of decision-makers, practitioners and, stakeholders.

3. Reviewing the MPA Center's On-Line Cultural Resource Toolkit

What: The MPA FAC will: (a) reconvene the Cultural Heritage Resource Working Group (CRWG) with new membership; (b) review, evaluate, and update the online Cultural Heritage Resource Toolkit to meet current needs; and, (c) recommend ways to increase its reach and impact.

Why: The MPA FAC's Cultural Heritage Resource Working Group (CHRWG) created an online Cultural Heritage Resource Toolkit to provide an introduction to cultural resource management for MPA managers and provide them the information, tools and insights to effectively and equitably understand and manage cultural heritage resources within MPAs. Completed in 2014, that initial version of the Toolkit requires updating with new information. The CHRWG will continue its collaborative work to help MPA managers understand cultural heritage resources and how to manage them.

How: The reconvened CHRWG should review the Toolkit and recommend ways to enhance it, both in terms of content and distribution.

For Additional Information

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