

Sanctuary Nomination Process

Summer 2014

For the first time in twenty years, NOAA has re-established a process for the public to nominate nationally significant marine and Great Lakes areas as potential new national marine sanctuaries. This community-based process addresses a growing number of requests for new national marine sanctuaries from diverse interests around the country.

This action will help fulfill NOAA's mandate under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to identify marine areas of special national significance and supports the administration's goals of ensuring healthy coastal communities and economies. The agency received nearly 18,000 comments on the June 2013 proposal, the vast majority of which were in strong support. NOAA is not designating any new national marine sanctuaries with this action, a step towards addressing the growing number of requests for new national marine sanctuaries from a variety of interested constituents from around the country.

The Next Steps

NOAA's website (www.nominate.noaa.gov) describes the nomination process, including the list of criteria and considerations that NOAA will use to evaluate nominations. NOAA expects the nomination review process to take approximately three to six months. After the review is complete, successfully nominated sites will be placed in an inventory of areas NOAA could consider for national marine sanctuary designation.

Once an area is placed in the inventory, NOAA may consider beginning the separate multi-year, highly participatory designation process for that area. The national marine sanctuary designation process is described in the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Being in the inventory does not guarantee that NOAA will designate that area as a national marine sanctuary in the future, and it does not establish any regulations or limit activities in the area.

Typically, marine sanctuary designations take three to five years. The designation process depends on a range of factors, including the complexity of the area, the proposed regulations, the level of support from current user groups, and agency resources.

Anticipated Benefits

Across national marine sanctuaries, NOAA economists estimate about \$6 billion annually is generated in local coastal and ocean-dependent economies from diverse activities like commercial fishing, research, and recreation-tourist activities.



Photo: Ari Friedlaender

Sanctuary designations provide many diverse benefits for coastal communities including the opportunity for the protection of nationally significant marine and cultural resources; social and economic benefits; increased opportunities for management, research, and education; and community engagement.

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Questions & Answers

Why is NOAA re-establishing a process to nominate new sites now?

NOAA is re-establishing the process in response to numerous requests from communities and stakeholders, political leaders, and other interests from across the country. These requests often reference the many and diverse benefits communities realize from a national marine sanctuary. This action also fulfills NOAA's mandate under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to identify marine and Great Lakes areas of special national significance and supports NOAA's goals of ensuring healthy coastal communities and economies.

How do I nominate a new site? What types of information do I need to provide?

Once the final rule is published in the Federal Register establishing the Sanctuary Nomination Process, it will provide more information on the community-based sanctuary nomination process, including what to include in a nomination. NOAA will also have more information once the rule is published on the Sanctuary Nomination Process website (www.nominate.noaa.gov) which will include a guide to help prepare a nomination.

When should I submit a nomination?

A nomination should be submitted when a community believes that a marine or Great Lakes area meets the national significance criteria and management considerations, and would benefit from becoming a national marine sanctuary.

Is there a nomination deadline?

There are no deadlines for submissions. Nominations will be reviewed as they are received by NOAA.

How will the nomination process affect uses of the marine environment?

Re-establishing the sanctuary nomination process conveys no direct regulatory protections, nor does it establish any new national marine sanctuaries. NOAA would implement regulations only after a nominated area has gone through the sanctuary designation process, a separate activity that is highly public and participatory and typically takes years to complete.

Where can I find more information about NOAA's sanctuary system?

More information about NOAA's national marine sanctuary system can be found at: sanctuaries.noaa.gov

Whom do I contact with questions?

For general questions regarding the sanctuary nomination process, please contact NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: sanctuary.nominations@noaa.gov



National Marine Sanctuary Nomination Summary, Guidelines and Checklist

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in nominating an area of the marine or Great Lakes waters to become a national marine sanctuary. The following is a summary of the site nomination process. More detailed information can be found at www.nominate.noaa.gov, including previously submitted nominations for use as a reference.

Please be aware that all nominating materials submitted to NOAA will be posted publically on the site nomination website. Nominations should not include confidential, sensitive or protected business information. NOAA will attempt to remove personal identifying information before a nomination is posted online, but please minimize including this type of information.

Document Guidelines

NOAA does not have a form for nominations, however the following guidelines apply:

1. The nomination maximum length is 25 pages. Letters of support may be submitted as an appendix beyond the 25 page limit. No additional appendices will be accepted.
 2. Nominations should use a Times New Roman font, 12 point font size, and one inch margins. Nominations that do not follow these formatting reasons will be returned.
 3. The nomination must not include any copyrighted information without the nominator first acquiring for or granting to the Government a copyright license for the information.
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NOAA Review

NOAA will review each nomination based on the information submitted in the nomination package. The nomination package must consist of one submission containing all of the information the nominating community wants NOAA to consider. NOAA will not include any additional information once the nomination package is submitted. This will be a qualitative analysis so NOAA will not be applying a numerical score to any nomination. Nominations will not be judged against each other.

The strongest nominations will provide a clear connection and focus on the criteria and considerations that are relevant to the goals and intent for the nominated area, and provide as much information as possible for those. NOAA is not establishing a minimum number of national significance criteria, nor giving greater significance to any particular criterion. Nominations should provide information addressing all seven management considerations, with special emphasis on Consideration #7 that describes community-based support.

There are no deadlines for submissions. Nominations will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received by NOAA.

Nomination Submission

Nominations should be addressed to the Director of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and submitted by either:

Electronic

Submit nomination packages to: sanctuary.nominations@noaa.gov

Mail

Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway
11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Nomination Preparation Checklist

Please make sure you have included the following four sections in your nomination package:

Section I - Basics

- **Nomination Title**
- **Nominator Name(s) and Affiliation(s)**
- **Nomination Point of Contact** - Name, Phone, Email, Address

Section II - Introduction

- **Narrative Description** – a brief overview of the nomination
- **Goals Description** – a brief description of why you are nominating this area
- **Location Description** – a brief overview of the area being nominated including a detailed map. Please be as specific and descriptive as possible

Section III – Criteria Information

Provide detailed information on each of the criteria below that are relevant to your nomination.

Criteria 1

The area's natural resources and ecological qualities are of special significance and contribute to: biological productivity or diversity; maintenance or enhancement of ecosystem structure and function; maintenance of ecologically or commercially important species or species assemblages; maintenance or enhancement of critical habitat, representative biogeographic assemblages, or both; or maintenance or enhancement of connectivity to other ecologically significant resources.

Criteria 2

The area contains submerged maritime heritage resources of special historical, cultural, or archaeological significance, that individually or collectively are consistent with the criteria of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; have met or which would meet the criteria for designation as a National Historic Landmark; or have special or sacred meaning to the indigenous people of the region or nation.

Criteria 3

The area supports present and potential economic uses, such as tourism; commercial and recreational fishing; subsistence and traditional uses; diving; and other recreational uses that depend on conservation and management of the area's resources.

Criteria 4

The publically-derived benefits of the area, such as aesthetic value, public recreation, and access to places depend on conservation and management of the area's resources.

Section IV – Consideration Information

Provide as much detailed information as you are able on each of the seven considerations, with an emphasis on describing community support (Consideration #7).

Consideration 1

The area provides or enhances opportunities for research in marine science, including marine archaeology.

Consideration 2

The area provides or enhances opportunities for education, including the understanding and appreciation of the marine and Great Lakes environments.

Consideration 3

Adverse impacts from current or future uses and activities threaten the area's significance, values, qualities, and resources.

Consideration 4

A national marine sanctuary would provide unique conservation and management value for this area or adjacent areas.

Consideration 5

The existing regulatory and management authorities for the area could be supplemented or complemented to meet the conservation and management goals for the area.

Consideration 6

There are commitments or possible commitments for partnerships opportunities such as cost sharing, office space, exhibit space, vessel time, or other collaborations to aid conservation or management programs for the area.

Consideration 7

There is community-based support for the nomination expressed by a broad range of interests, such as individuals or locally-based groups (e.g., friends of group, chamber of commerce); local, tribal, state, or national elected officials; or topic-based stakeholder groups, at the local, regional or national level (e.g., a local chapter of an environmental organization, a regionally-based fishing group, a national-level recreation or tourism organization, academia or science-based group, or an industry association).

Questions

For general questions regarding the sanctuary nomination process, please contact:

Matt Brookhart

Chief, Policy & Planning Division
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway
11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910
sanctuary.nominations@noaa.gov

For specific interest in nominating areas:

Maine to North Carolina, or the Great Lakes

Reed Bohne

Northeast and Great Lakes Regional Director
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
10 Ocean Science Circle
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