



CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

April 29, 2021

9:10 AM

Held as a Virtual Meeting

Note: The following meeting notes are an account of discussions at the meeting of the Sanctuary Advisory Council for Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS). The council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of CBNMS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Call to Order/Welcome/Review Virtual Meeting Logistics/Roll Call (Bec Detrich)

Bec Detrich, Advisory Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:11 AM and welcomed everyone. She went over some of the features of the virtual meeting platform. Jennifer Stock is providing technical support, and will monitor the chat and unmute members of the public during the public comment period. For questions and comments, Bec asked that people say them out loud as chat is not accessible to everyone. She noted the meeting was not being recorded. Lilli Ferguson, advisory council coordinator, then called roll.

Nongovernmental Members Present:

Frank Borodic (Community-at-Large - Marin County)
Tom Anderson (Community-at-Large – Sonoma County)
Steve Tubbs (Community-at-Large – Sonoma County)
Scott Artis (Conservation)
Morgan Patton (Conservation)
Bec Detrich (Chair; Education)
Irma Cuevas (Education)
Noah Wagner (Fishing)
Chris Hendry (Maritime Activities)
Kai Martin (Maritime Activities)
Jeff Dorman (Research)
Chrissy Piotrowski (Research)

Agency Members and Alternates Present:

Brian Johnson (Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary [GFNMS] Superintendent – Alt.)
LT Kynan Barrios (NOAA Fisheries – Alt.)
LTJG Chris Bell (USCG – Alt.)

Members of the CBNMS staff present:

Dan Howard (Sanctuary Superintendent)
Michael Carver (Deputy Superintendent and Resource Protection Coordinator)
Lilli Ferguson (Resource Protection Specialist and advisory council coordinator)
Danielle Lipski (Research Coordinator)
Rachel Pound (Research Operational Specialist [NOAA Affiliate])
Jennifer Stock (Education and Outreach Coordinator)

Review and Approve Agenda (Bec)

- The Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (CBNMSAC) reviewed the agenda and, with two changes, that the Executive Order number should be 14008 and Danielle Lipski's name should replace Dan Howard's for the program report item, unanimously approved it.

Review and Approve February Meeting Minutes (Bec)

- The advisory council reviewed the February 25, 2021 minutes and unanimously approved them.

Sanctuary Superintendent's Report (Dan)

- Dan said COVID conditions were improving; Marin County is almost ready to move into the least restrictive, yellow tier. The number of new cases is declining and availability of intensive care unit beds is increasing. Vaccines are available. NOAA considers these things in allowing staff to return to the office. All CBNMS staff members are teleworking from home, which will continue to be the case for a while. Dani will report later on field operations opening up.

- Regarding diversity on the advisory council and the question of adding advisory council members to the preliminary review panel, which came up at the February meeting, we found that sites have flexibility on that. The preliminary review panel helps determine the top candidates from a particular pool of applicants for an advisory council seat. At CBNMS, the preliminary review panel is made up of the Chair and Vice-chair, with Lilli as the site representative. The superintendent, in consultation with the Chair and likely, the Vice-Chair, if they were agreeable, could choose to add 1-2 advisory council members to the panel. This would probably be driven by the complexity of the selection.

- Lilli clarified there is always a preliminary review panel to review a pool of applicants.

- Dan said, as Lilli described at the last meeting and confirmed with the national advisory council coordinator, the preliminary review panel does not function as an advisory council subunit (a subcommittee or working group), since subunits are required to provide their findings through the advisory council to the superintendent. The preliminary review panel just works with the superintendent and the site staff person.

- Bec said she got a letter from John Armor, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Director related to that topic. She read from the letter: I was recently notified of two recommendations for consideration by ONMS that were adopted during the CBNMSAC meeting on 2/25/21. I would like to thank you all for the time and dedication that has been spent working on diversity and inclusion in member recruitment efforts for the advisory council. I am pleased to share that I have asked Katie Denman, our National Advisory Council Coordinator, to work with all of our sanctuary advisory council coordinators from across the system to update the advisory council application form and process to include more welcoming and inclusive language and a specific question on how potential candidates can help reach more diverse audiences. In addition, Katie will also be asking several members of other advisory councils to provide feedback on this effort. Bec noted that the letter extended an offer for any member of the advisory council to provide feedback on this effort, and the simplest way if someone wanted to participate would be to write to Lilli and let her know so she could pass that along.

- Dan stated that ONMS contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), a kind of think tank, to review the National Marine Sanctuaries program over the last five decades. There was a previous NAPA report on the sanctuaries. This one has been produced in preparation for the ONMS 50th anniversary in 2022; it will come out in the next couple of weeks. NAPA evaluated the impact and major achievements, assessed potential high-level directions and major challenges and opportunities for the program over the next 20-50 years. The ONMS Leadership Team had a call with one of the co-authors; a quick summary is that ONMS is doing some incredible work with very little funding; it is hugely underfunded. Having said that, the program could do a much better job with some strategic changes.

- The ONMS 50th anniversary will celebrate the protection of special ocean places and promotion of sustainable use of the marine environment. ONMS has a strategy to leverage the anniversary to fundamentally reinvent how sanctuaries contribute to ocean conservation and the communities they serve.

It will be an opportunity to update our brand, image and logo. As the year progresses, the advisory council will hear more about the celebration plans.

- The Flower Garden Bank National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS) expansion was approved on March 22. The sanctuary increased from 56 to 160 square miles to protect additional critical habitat in the Gulf of Mexico. It includes isolated salt domes, like reefs, which are incredibly productive areas with invertebrate coverage similar to Cordell Bank. The sanctuary is now made up of 17 different reefs and banks within 19 separate boundary areas. The mud bottom of the Gulf between these is not included in the sanctuary. It was an incredibly long and hard process, and Dan congratulated the FGBNMS team that got it done.

- He reported some highlights of the Cordell Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF), which had a board meeting the week before this meeting. Board members Rob Lee (who joined recently) and Gavin Chilcott gave a great presentation and there was a good discussion of connecting with donors and CMSF strategies, including matching funds, corporate donations, etc. They both bring corporate expertise.

- Dan announced that he is retiring June 30th. It is not clear how his position will be backfilled. He said the ONMS West Coast Regional Director, Bill Douros, has said several options are being considered and that ONMS headquarters would provide information about how they are proceeding to the staff by the middle of May. Dan reflected that, over the years, he has been incredibly impressed by what the advisory council has taken on since its creation in 2001. All CBNMS programs have evolved under the advisory council's guidance to him. He is proud of how the advisory council has engaged and provided meaningful recommendations. Cordell Bank and other offshore reef areas, Bodega Canyon, the shelf and slope make up an incredible place. The advisory council has helped protect it. We are now seeing basin or regional uses that could impact the sanctuary. It is bittersweet to leave with the potential for changes that the new administration might bring. Working with passionate advisory council members over the years has made this job interesting and engaging. With a warm heart, he is passing the baton off to the staff and all of the people on the advisory council. He closed with a heartfelt thanks. He looked forward to staying in touch.

- Bec and others expressed what a pleasure it had been to work with Dan, and thanked him for his leadership and guidance, and for the great CBNMS team around him. He will be missed. A few shared personal anecdotes about Dan.

- There was a question, when was the last NAPA report? Dan thought it was in 2008.

Advisory Council Business (Bec and Lilli)

- Bec explained the process for the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair, for two year officer terms. This has to be done by written ballot. Members who could not attend had the opportunity to submit an absentee ballot to Lilli. She hoped people read the candidate statements submitted by Kai Martin for Chair and Irma Cuevas for Vice-Chair in advance. She invited them to share a few words if desired.

- Irma said she was super excited to be part of the advisory council and that there was momentum to improve the paradigm. She was excited to add to equity, diversity and inclusion work.

- Bec commented Irma completed work for her Master's degree, and has experience working with the public and managing public spaces, and perhaps she could share about that in the future.

- Kai did not have much to share beyond his statement, though he noted he had not met some of the new people face to face, and hoped to do so. He welcomed the opportunity to serve as the Chair.

- Bec explained that all members would vote first for Chair, then again for Vice-Chair, by writing to Lilli in the virtual chat feature, and explained how to do this. One person who had a technical difficulty was invited to submit votes to Lilli via email.

- Lilli stated one member had submitted an absentee ballot in advance, and she made arrangements with a member joining by phone how to submit a written vote to her.

- After the CBNMS voted for Chair, Lilli counted the votes and announced that Kai had been elected unanimously from among the votes cast.

- After the CBNMS voted for Vice-Chair, Lilli counted the votes and announced that Irma had been elected unanimously from among the votes cast.

Study of Deep-sea Corals to Understand Modern and Past Oceanographic Change (Carina Fish)

- Dani introduced Carina Fish, who is at U.C. Davis, Bodega Marine Laboratory. She is a Nancy Foster Scholar, as is Kate Hewitt and Samara Haver, who presented at previous meetings. Dani briefly described the Scholar program and about Carina's research on corals and ocean water chemistry. She has joined CBNMS and partner researchers on a dozen or more research cruises.
- Carina thanked Dani and the CBNMS for inviting her to speak. Though she works on several things, her research is focused on coastal ocean change, both modern and past, including looking at the changing surface of the ocean and how that manifests in the deep sea. Most deep sea communities rely on exported carbon from the surface as an energy subsidy; she would like to understand the extent that changes at the surface affect benthic communities along the California margin.
- She explained some of the ocean processes that affect coral growth, including things like consuming the remains of dead plankton, and water temperature, oxygenation, carbon, rate of coral growth, etc. Some deep sea corals may live for hundreds or thousands of years and can be found thousands of meters below the surface. They grow slowly. Corals below the depth where light can penetrate do not have algae and do not get food from photosynthesis. It can be hard and expensive to get samples of deep sea corals at deep depths, but it is possible with remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) like the ones Ocean Exploration Trust has deployed in CBNMS.
- Bamboo corals (*Isididae*) are like "living sediment traps". Organic nodes in their skeletons can be used as a surface record and calcite internodes in their skeletons can be used as a deep water record.
- Carina provided an overview of the California Current, the subsurface California Undercurrent, the Coastal Jet, the North Pacific Current, and the Southern California Eddy and scientific understanding of how they work, as well as how they affect the environment in which corals grow.
- She described a variety of factors and existing studies, as well as her methodology, to describe how productivity and coral growth may be determined, and how upwelling and water masses influence those things. Carbon and nitrogen isotopes may be used as a proxy for past environmental parameters, and coral skeleton layers can be dated with radiocarbon dating. One important signal that shows up is from 1957, when nuclear testing started – a "bomb spike". Coral polyps and sediments are also studied.
- She was able to establish a chronology for the six coral samples studied; the techniques agreed on their ages. The samples were from CBNMS (bamboo corals from Bodega Canyon), Point Sur, and Southern California. She also plotted one from a previously published work.
- The California Undercurrent is the source of upwelled water. She described where the waters come from, how they are transported from south to north and mix, and how productivity is affected by factors such as wind stress and nitrogen isotope depletion.
- The results of the study of her corals indicate a slight, pretty steady enrichment of the carbon isotope over the 20th century. The CBNMS corals showed higher variability in nitrogen up to 1964, then lower variability after that. They suggest the carbon isotope signature of the upwelled waters caused the 20th century enrichment. The nearshore corals showed enrichment of the carbon isotope, with the one nearest to shore suggesting a state shift.
- There are different things that can affect the food particles that the corals eat, including rate of degradation by microbes, reduced oxygen, particle weight, and a change in food source. They are still trying to figure out which answer works best to explain the results for the corals in this study. It could be due to a half percent nitrogen isotope depletion after 1964 in equatorial Pacific waters, which are transported via the California Undercurrent. She described how this could affect the coral growth rates among the different regions the coral samples came from.
- A future direction is to cross correlate the trends seen in the corals by cross with climate indices.
- Carina said big takeaways are that the waters that bathe CBNMS are super dynamic, and there is interconnectedness of the ocean in this area with water masses south of us.
- In answer to a question about if signals can be discerned in the corals, like El Niño, large scale decadal oscillations or short term upwelling, Carina said they can see changes for upwelling seasons, but not for short-term blooms. She added that upwelling can favor some species to bloom more often than others.

- One person said the presentation challenged a basic concept of the source of upwelled water for CBNMS, which the person assumed, before this presentation came from the north via California Current.
- Were all of the bamboo corals the same species? They were all the same genus, she replied. The species can be hard to differentiate, but they have found it does not change much between the species in a genus.
- There was a question about the 1964 period with a fluctuation of nitrogen, and if Carina had looked into if anthropogenic changes then contributed to it? Carina thought probably not directly, though the point could be argued. She explained a number of parameters can influence such a sign.
- Bec encouraged people to reach out to Dani if there were other questions, who could connect people with Carina.

Public Comment

- There was none.

President Biden's Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad; Focus on Sec. 216(a) and 216(c) (Dan)

- Dan said that on 1/27/21, President Biden issued an Executive Order (EO) on Tackling the Climate Change Crisis at Home and Abroad. There was not enough information for him to be able to present on it to the advisory council in February, so is doing it now. He focused on two things in the EO: Section 216(a) is relevant to NOAA and ONMS and is on the 30 by 30 initiative and Section 216(c) is on climate resilience for fisheries and protected resources.
- Section 216(a) The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, and the heads of other relevant agencies, shall submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. He did not know if report had been submitted yet. There is a lot of discussion on what would be included in the marine water areas, and questions, with no determination made yet, about if national marine sanctuaries would be included, or if an area has to be no take area to be included. The public comment period ended April 2; however, ONMS has said there will be opportunities to comment on both of the EO sections.
- Section 216(c) The Secretary of Commerce, through the Administrator of NOAA, shall initiate efforts in the first 60 days from the date of this order to collect input from fishermen, regional ocean councils, fishery management councils, scientists, and other stakeholders on how to make fisheries and protected resources more resilient to climate change, including changes in management and conservation measures, and improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research. This is directly related to the kind of work ONMS does and we will be part of the conversation on increasing resilience to climate change in sanctuaries.
- These actions are consistent with priorities established by national marine sanctuaries in the last several years to protect important ocean areas, work with partners, monitor climate change, and protect sanctuary habitats so they are healthy.
- For national marine sanctuaries like Cordell Bank where advisory councils did not have a meeting on this before April 2, ONMS asked to have this be an agenda topic at the next meeting after that date, and has said ONMS staff will pull a meeting together on this EO, to include advisory council chair, advisory council coordinators, and superintendents. The meeting will provide additional background information and ways that advisory councils can provide input on these two actions. We are not sure how the invitation to the chair will be extended.
- Dan added that the report referenced under 216(a) is to provide guidelines for determining whether what lands and waters qualify for conservation, and is to establish mechanisms to measure progress towards the 30 percent goal by 2030. The Secretary of the Interior is the lead on that, and is to submit annual reports to the Task Force to monitor progress. He noted Lilli has other information on this.

- Lilli said she worked with Dan on the bullet points he presented; however, we do not know when the workshop will be or how the Chair will be informed. For more info about the EO, EOs are posted on the White House website and in the Federal Register, in the presidential actions sub-page.

CBNMS Education, Resource Protection, and Outreach and Conservation Science Program Reports (Jennifer Stock, Michael Carver, and Danielle Lipski)

Education and Outreach: Jennifer noted she has been preparing data on education and sense of place for the Condition Report workshops that are coming up.

- She has continued doing virtual classroom visits, recently doing one with Miller Creek Elementary and Sebastopol Charter schools.

- Jennifer is working on building out an ongoing intern program in which science interns could give virtual talks, including during virtual classroom visits. A National Science Foundation intern will help Jenny, starting in August, with building the program, including solidifying pre and post presentation activities, identifying underserved schools within the region to reach out to, and creating a framework for ongoing delivery of the virtual classroom visits.

- In the past (though not last year due to coronavirus), CBNMS has had information in the Marine and Sonoma Coast Guide, which includes information about the coast and things to do. She is working with Carol Preston of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) to get the information on the two sanctuaries into the guide again this year.

- In August, she will do a presentation as part of the Sonoma Land Trust Language of the Land series, focusing on the land beneath the sea.

- Annually, there is an ONMS Get into Your Sanctuary Day; this year it will be in the first two weeks of August and is likely to be virtual. It promotes national marine sanctuaries, what to appreciate about them, a photo contest, and more. Information about it will come out before then.

- Jenny said, in response to a question, that she was working with Linda Peterson on the Coast Guide.

- There was a question regarding the audience for the webinars. Jenny responded that the virtual classroom webinars are for K-12 students. Some webinars in the past have been public. The one for the Land Trust is a part of a series, and she was invited to be part of it.

- Would Jenny want to partner with Sonoma County Parks in August, which is doing more things outdoors? Jenny was not sure if she would have more guidance by then or not, but could respond to Irma once she has more information.

Resource Protection: Michael gave an update on enforcement of a CBNMS regulation about not discharging anything except clean water from a cruise ship. From 2015 to 2018 Princess Cruises was violating this, and self reported it. NOAA reached settlement with Princess Cruises. The discharges were of food waste, processed permeate, treated and untreated gray water and black water, bioreactor sludge, advanced waste water treatment permeate, scrubber wash water, and treated sewage. The settlement amount was \$294,000.

- Enforcement Technical Advisory Committee meetings bring together partners from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, parks, sheriffs, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife with staff members from CBNMS and GFNMS to talk about new staff members, patrol efforts, priorities and leveraging resources. The agencies have different priorities, but jurisdictions overlap. Working with Max Delaney of GFNMS, they scheduled the next meeting for May 18.

- Results in 2020 for the project to reduce ship strikes of endangered whales were that there was 64-65% cooperation with the voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) request. He thought the increase was due to being consistent in the request over time, outreach to the industry, and direct communication, and was spurred on by the partnerships with air districts and the incentive program. The 2021 voluntary VSR starts May 1 and goes through November 15.

- Regional and national level ONMS efforts are in process for updating the ONMS strategic plan, with various people helping and providing input internally. The resource protection staff are working to codify a lot of things the staff does. In addition, there is work to create internal guidance documents.

- Michael asked Lilli to present on two topics. She said that since the November CBNMSAC meeting, one permit was issued for continued operation of Coastal Data Information Program buoys and two letters of Authorization were issued under the Superintendent's permit for continued operation and maintenance of two oceanographic buoys and one Noise Reference Station acoustic buoy. She said two permit applications were received and were under review, for continued integrated ecosystem and Pacific Hake acoustic trawl surveys and Sea Education Association cruises.
- Lilli also briefly reviewed a recent EO that pertains to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations which went into effect on 9/14/20, including streamlining of timelines for environmental analyses. As a federal agency, NOAA must follow NEPA in proposing major federal actions. In the 1/20/21 EO 13990, it stated our nation has an abiding commitment to empower our workers and communities; promote and protect our public health and the environment; and conserve our national treasures and monuments. All executive departments/agencies are to review and take appropriate action to address federal regulations and other executive actions taken 1/20/17 – 1/20/21 that conflict with the national objectives in the EO. It revoked EO 13766 (high priority infrastructure projects an expedited procedures and deadlines for review and permit approvals) and EO 13807 (established procedures designed for federal agencies to complete federal reviews and authorization decisions within 2 years). It also ordered the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to rescind draft 2019 NEPA guidance on consideration of greenhouse gas emissions and consistent review and directed CEQ to review and update its previous final guidance from 2016. NOAA and ONMS will ensure alignment of agency guidance with any new or revised CEQ NEPA guidance or regulations.
- There was a question about if CBNMS had any interactions with the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Michael said he had not, as part of his work. Lilli related that CBNMS is required to, and has, interacted with the CCC on proposed actions that may affect resources and uses in the coastal zone, such as with regulatory updates, like the expansion of CBNMS and GFNMS.

Conservation Science: Dani said she originally had not been going to be at this meeting; she was scheduled to be out on the Shimada for the Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies (ACCESS), but it had engine trouble and the cruise was cancelled; this caused cascading effects to the schedule. They will do ACCESS on the Fulmar in June. The partners have shown a lot of commitment and stuck through all the coordination changes and paperwork. The July and September Fulmar cruises will go on as planned, and there is a cruise in August on the Fulmar using an ROV. COVID adjustments also have to be made, such as having fewer people on a cruise.

- Five ecological indicator workshops for the updated Condition Report were held; data, much of it from partners, was presented; and the ratings were completed. Ecosystem services workshops will be held in May; a human activities workshop to examine the levels of those in the sanctuary will be held, possibly in June. She thanked those who have participated or have been invited to participate. The staff will take the content, and draft the report. Once ready, the advisory council will get a formal request, likely this fall, to review it. She will have a better sense of when further into the process. The Condition Report will lay a nice groundwork for helping develop the next management plan.

Members' and Alternates' Reports (advisory council)

Frank Borodic – commented on some different groups he participates in; everything we do is interdependent. He is the President of the West Marin Chamber of Commerce; a number of businesses, including some restaurants, have been lost. Some, like grocery stores have done well. The Marin Economic Forum, a public-private collective, talks about the economic status of the county. The county has a high proportion of its economy in the service industry, so the economy has been suffering greatly. There is a need to develop a county economic strategy. Tourism is a major part of the county's economy; see an opportunity for CBNMS in that. The Marin Visitors Bureau is starting to promote Marin with TV ads and more. He has been part of a working group since 2015 that is a liaison with the county the CCC. The CCC is hung up on environmental hazards, such as how far from a bluff buildings may be, how high, etc. He felt all that will impact what the advisory council does and vice versa.

Tom Anderson – did not have a lot on the Sonoma County side to report. In San Francisco, they have seen a lot of dead whales in the Bay – there were three recently, and one was a fin whale. He was not sure if the causes of death were known or if those were still being studied. He knew the voluntary VSR would start May 1. One of the gray whales was pulled from right in front of his marina by the Army Corps of Engineers. He wished Dan all the best in his retirement.

Steve Tubbs – most groups he is involved with are meeting virtually. The Russian River Fly Fishers, for which he is a board member, is still doing Steelhead in the Classroom, virtually this year. One club member has helped with the Sonoma County water agency and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Steelhead in the Classroom Live program. They are in eight or nine episodes now and those are shared with all classrooms in Sonoma County that are participating. The Russian River Fly Fishers are sponsoring a film those agencies are producing for elementary school children that covers steelhead in the Russian River watershed. He will share information about the film when it is done.

Scott Artis - had nothing conservation-minded to share, but said cheers to Bec and Lilli and gave a shout out to Dan for a great ride. He hoped he would have fun in retirement.

Bec - mentioned some schools are open and some are not. She urged people to be kind to educators, who she gave kudos to; they are juggling many things and may be parents too. She shared that she was offered a new position, and is moving to Washington, to be Executive Director of the North Cascades Institute, doing the same kind of work as before. She will be in transition in the next couple of months. The Chair at Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary reached out to her and is excited Bec is moving to Washington. She appreciated Jenny letting her know about the opportunity to apply join the advisory council a few years ago. She also conveyed much appreciation to the group; she learned a lot.

Noah Wagner – congratulated Dan, and noted he had had a long ride. It has been a pleasure working with him. He also thanked Bec and Dick for being a great chair and vice-chair, and welcomed Kai and Irma to their new roles. The salmon season is delayed this year; fishing in front of Bodega Bay for the commercial guys will not kick off until June. All the fishermen are traveling to the May 1 opening for south of Pigeon Point to the Mexican border. After the open dates there, the season will open here. The sport guys are getting started up here on June 28. There is a major delay in the recreational salmon season. The Bodega Bay Fisherman's Festival has been cancelled for this year. The breakwall is open for public access fishing around Spud Point Marina. The Marina got grant funding for a new pumpout and it is on the dock for all boaters to access. The California Marine Sanctuary Foundation gave them a beautiful sign at the Sport Fishing Center, which shows all the marine protected areas in the area.

Chris Hendry – echoed the sentiments of congratulations and was excited to have Kai and Irma on board. He was sad to hear about the whales, but it was good to hear the VSR update. He asked if there was a way to identify the vessels not meeting the target speed. He said Chevron has a year round slowdown, even for those non-Chevron vessels that come into their facility. He wanted to understand who could do better. He has stepped down from the Harbor Safety Committee. He also changed jobs. He mentioned Julian Rose, a strong advocate of CBNMS, is on the Harbor Safety Committee and a Work Group and has helped to get more visibility around the VSR and getting it plotted.

Kai - Chris captured a couple updates he would have made. Chris' company will be signing up for the VSR this year. He was also saddened about the whales; he noted there was a severe amount of port congestion at the moment in both Los Angeles and Oakland. Anywhere from 7-10 ships are slow steaming off the coast waiting to come into the Bay. Because they are going so slow, they may not (he hoped) be hitting as many whales. The congestion is expected to last through the end of the year.

Jeff Dorman – to continue on the whale discussion, which has been all over the news, he noted an CBNMSAC working group on the topic of reducing ship strikes of whales formed at the last meeting. Dick and Kai agreed to be on it, with him. Afterwards, Jeff volunteered to be a co-chair of the working group. This working group has people from both the CBNMSAC and the GFNMS Advisory Council. His organization is involved in looking at whale entanglement with crab pots now, an issue that is separate but similar. There was an initial meeting between himself, the GFNMS Advisory Council working group co-chair, Julian, and the staff people guiding them through the process. They are working through details related to addressing the sanctuaries' goal to reduce the risk of lethal ship strikes to endangered and threatened blue, humpback, and fin whales by 50% throughout GFNMS and CBNMS. They are also working through who else, among outside experts, will be invited to join. The next organizational meeting with the co-chairs is May 10. Soon, invitations will go out and then they can start scheduling the working group meetings.

Chrissy Piotrowski – does not much to report from her remote location, but wanted to congratulate Bec on her new position. She thanked Bec and Dick (in absentia) for their service. She also congratulated and thanked Dan. He has been a strong advocate for scientific exploration and discovery, and worked strongly with her and her predecessor at the California Academy of Sciences.

Brian Johnson - echoed the congratulations to Dan; he said it was a pleasure getting to know him personally and professionally over last 20 years or so and knows Dan has great things ahead. He also congratulated Bec, and looked forward to working with Irma and Kai. GFNMS works closely with CBNMS on ACCESS, education, reducing ship strikes of whales, etc. and the updates have already been given on those. Since the last CBNMSAC meeting the American Challenger grounded when it broke loose from its tug as it was being towed from Seattle. The USCG was unable to determine how much fuel was on board. There was a response stand down. A group from Marin County and the Environmental Protection Agency is still working on trying to find ways and funding to get the vessel removed. It is not in an accessible area and there is no easy way to get it removed. Maria Brown was heavily involved in the Incident Command and is now working on the continued removal effort. A number of other GFNMS staff members are also involved; this has been impactful to the site. No oiled wildlife has been observed, but the vessel still poses a pollution threat to our area.

LT Kynan Barrios – gave thanks for the informative presentations and congratulated those moving on and retiring and those newly elected. He noted the Technical Advisory Committee would meeting in a few weeks, in May. It has not met in a while; he will report out on it at the next CBNMSAC meeting. He is looking forward to working with those partners.

LTJG Chris Bell – if anyone has any information on recent (or new) whale deaths or entanglements off the coast of California, let the USCG office in Alameda or San Francisco know. The USCG can leverage air assets to assist if needed in locating whales or may send out a general broadcast to mariners. The USCG is planning a surge in operations for salmon season in the coming months. He owes CBNMS some info on human use for the Condition Report, and is looking forward to contributing to that.

Lilli thanked Bec and Dick and said she was excited to work with Kai and Irma.

Dan thanked the advisory council again. He thanked Lilli for assisting the advisory council in moving ahead on so many issues. The thanked the whole staff for their good work. Before he retires, he will let the advisory council know how to contact him post retirement.

Bec adjourned the meeting at 12:38 PM.