

SANCTUARY OPERATIONS STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

*Recommended for inclusion in the revised management plan by the OCNMS Advisory Council on
November 20, 2009*

I. INTRODUCTION

At its May meeting, the OCNMS Advisory Council (AC) grouped several MPR scoping topics (Administration – Regulations, Permitting and Enforcement, Administration – Infrastructure, Flexibility to Respond to Emerging Issues) under the topic of Sanctuary Operations. Instead of forming an AC working group to address the topic of Sanctuary Operations, the AC agreed that OCNMS staff should develop preliminary recommendations on this topic and present them to the AC at its September 2009 meeting. Following this presentation, OCNMS requested that AC members provide comments on these strategies and activities. Comments were received from four members of the Advisory Council, which were incorporated into a second draft of the document and presented to the AC again at its November 2009 meeting. At this meeting, the AC agreed to forward the strategies and activities (with minor changes) on to the Sanctuary Superintendent with a recommendation that they be incorporated into the revised management plan.

II. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

FIELD OPERATIONS

STRATEGY OPS1: Maintain a presence on the waters of the OCNMS to ensure effective and efficient sanctuary operations.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

Sanctuary staff have the resources to safely access the waters and adjacent shorelines of the Sanctuary to implement Action Plans.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Develop annual operational plans for aircraft and vessels (NOAA, charter) to support the revised management plan.

ACTIVITY B: Maintain and implement boat operational guidelines.

ACTIVITY C: Maintain and implement vessel operator and crew member qualification plan.

ACTIVITY D: Periodically review the need for diving operations.

ACTIVITY E: Implement field operations to address activities identified in Action Plans.

PARTNERS: NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, Western Regional Administrative Division, NOAA Small Boat Program

RESOURCES: Staff time for contract oversight and operations planning; funds to support vessel maintenance and operations

INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY OPS2: Develop new, and maintain current, infrastructure for sanctuary offices, programs, research vessels, equipment, and field operations.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

Ensure that OCNMS has adequate facilities to support its research, education and outreach, protection, visitor services, and administrative functions.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Update and implement the OCNMS long-range facilities plan. Evaluate OCNMS's current office, lab and warehouse spaces and determine if changes to the facilities plan are required to meet program needs.

- Evaluate current office spaces to determine if they meet future needs as articulated in the revised management plan;
- Evaluate need to refurbish/replace OCNMS's Neah Bay field station;
- Evaluate the need for laboratory infrastructure;
- Evaluate OCNMS pier space needs;
- Evaluate need for public meeting space and support infrastructure.

ACTIVITY B: Evaluate options for a satellite office on the Outer coast and/or a visitor center in the southern part of the Sanctuary.

ACTIVITY C: Explore opportunities to work with organizations that have facilities on the Outer Coast, such as the University of Washington Olympic Natural Resources Center, in order to maintain an OCNMS staff presence on the Outer Coast.

ACTIVITY D: Develop the infrastructure to support and implement OCNMS's interpretive plan (to be developed in 2009).

ACTIVITY E: Continually strive to ensure that all sanctuary facilities are managed in as environmentally friendly a manner as possible.

- Conduct an audit of OCNMS's carbon footprint and determine what changes are needed to ensure that OCNMS meets NOAA's carbon footprint standards.
- Participate in the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Climate Smart Sanctuaries program in order to become certified as a climate-smart sanctuary.

ACTIVITY F: Implement OCNMS components of ONMS small boats requirements studies, as amended (including scheduled replacements of *R/V Tatoosh* and rigid hull inflatable boat).

ACTIVITY G: Collaborate with other West Coast region sanctuaries or other regional partners to acquire jointly (or cost-share) operational equipment (e.g. winches, hydrographic survey equipment) that can then be shared.

PARTNERS: West Coast sanctuaries, other NOAA agencies

RESOURCES: Appropriated Procurement, Acquisition, Construction (PAC) funds, facility planning contracts, staff time

ADMINISTRATION

STRATEGY OPS3: Prepare Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) and Annual budgets in support of Management Plan Activities.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

To ensure that long-term strategies identified in the management plan are integrated into the AOP process (which guides sanctuary work on a yearly basis) and to ensure that resources for implementing the management plan are allocated on an annual basis. .

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Produce an Annual Operating Plan and Budget, per ONMS guidance and timelines.

ACTIVITY B: Oversee budget, contracting and acquisitions in compliance with Federal Acquisition Regulations.

ACTIVITY C: Submit required report to ONMS headquarters.

STRATEGY OPS4: Maintain and, where necessary, further develop procedures to ensure the safety of staff and visitors.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

To maintain a safe environment for staff and visitors and prevent accidents

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Maintain and periodically test OCNMS's continuity of operations plan.

ACTIVITY B: Continue to ensure compliance with vessel and facility safety plans, including:

- OSHA reporting;
- ONMS small vessel and operator qualification reporting
- ONMS annual safety reporting;
- Annual reviews on key safety related manuals, i.e., Vessel Operations, Risk Assessments, and Facility Occupant Emergency Procedures,

ACTIVITY C: Continue to ensure compliance with all environmental compliance regulations.

PARTNERS: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO), NOAA Small Boat Program

RESOURCES: Staff time

STRATEGY OPS5: Maintain and build OCNMS's staff and volunteer programs in order to support ongoing programs and achieve the goals and objectives presented in the management plan.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

Ensure that OCNMS maintains well-trained staff and volunteers who possess the broad range of skills necessary to implement the management plan.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Support and maintain appropriate staffing to implement the OCNMS management plan.

ACTIVITY B: Contract for support services that are needed to implement the OCNMS management plan that cannot be filled by limited federal positions.

ACTIVITY C: Actively recruit and train volunteers to promote community stewardship and assist in implementing the OCNMS management plan.

ACTIVITY D: Improve training opportunities for staff and volunteers, prioritizing training that will support with management plan implementation, e.g., Incident Command System (ICS) training that will allow staff to respond to emergencies more efficiently and coordinate better with other responding agencies.

ACTIVITY E: Conduct an internal evaluation of the OCNMS information technology (IT) plan on an annual basis and work to ensure that IT services are adequate to support staff and program needs.

PARTNERS: Advisory Council Member agencies, governments and organizations, Feiro Marine Life Center, Makah Cultural Museum, Ocean Shores Visitor Center, COASST

RESOURCES: Staff time, Contracts, Volunteers, Training funds

PERMITTING

STRATEGY OPS6: Implement the OCNMS permitting program based on OCNMS and national program regulations and guidance; as well as other applicable laws, regulations and agreements.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

To ensure that OCNMS maintains an effective permitting program (which supports OCNMS's primary mandate of resource protection), and conducts appropriate consultations while being responsive to permit applicants.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Review permit applications, conduct consultations, draft and issue permits, and maintain records in the national database.

ACTIVITY B: Brief the AC and IPC on major permit applications that constitute new or major activities in the sanctuary.

ACTIVITY C: Report to the Coastal Treaty Tribes and OCNMS Advisory Council annually on the status of permit applications to OCNMS and associated tribal consultations.

ACTIVITY D: Formally articulate the current tribal consultation process for permits.

ACTIVITY E: Work with the state and other interested agencies and/or tribes to develop a programmatic agreement on how OCNMS interprets Section 106 requirements in the context of sanctuary cultural resources

PARTNERS: ONMS, Coastal Treaty Tribes, State of WA, ONP, FWS, ACOE, SHPO, NMFS, IPC, AC

RESOURCES: Staff time (to maintain permit database, produce briefings, conduct consultations, develop programmatic agreement etc.)

ENFORCEMENT

STRATEGY OPS7: Promote knowledge and understanding of OCNMS's regulations, along with other regulations and voluntary programs that apply to sanctuary waters. **[Note: Many of these strategies may also be appropriate in an Ocean Literacy action plan.]**

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

Promote awareness of the Sanctuary regulations, prevent impacts to resources, and improve voluntary compliance with regulations.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Assess opportunities for educational signage about regulations at access points to the Sanctuary (e.g., Neah Bay and La Push boat ramps).

ACTIVITY B: Develop materials (e.g., pamphlets, PowerPoint presentations, displays, posters) to support interpretive enforcement and other efforts to promote public awareness of Sanctuary regulations (e.g., presentations at public meetings).

ACTIVITY C: Publish an ATBA flyer in the Vessel Traffic Service Puget Sound (VTSPS) Users Manual.

ACTIVITY D: Develop and distribute education materials on OCNMS's overflight regulation.

PARTNERS: USCG, WDFW, Coastal Treaty Tribes, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, IPC, AC, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, and Washington Pilots Association

RESOURCES: Staff time, resources to support graphic design and printing of educational materials

STRATEGY OPS8: Promote and monitor compliance with OCNMS's regulations and other regulations and voluntary programs that apply to sanctuary waters.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

To prevent impacts to resources and assess the effectiveness of OCNMS's and others' regulations.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Encourage vessel owners to carry insurance that covers the cost of salvaging their vessels, should they sink in the Sanctuary. Discuss sanctuary regulations and concerns with insurance companies to evaluate issues related to the issuance of insurance policies that cover salvaging of sunken vessels.

ACTIVITY B: Work collaboratively to find a funding source for removing abandoned vessels in the Sanctuary when owners are not financially able to do so.

ACTIVITY C: When vessel incidents occur that may potentially result in vessel sinkings within Sanctuary waters, engage the USCG at the earliest opportunity to develop removal strategies through use of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (OSLTF). **[Note: this activity could also be included in a Spills action plan.]**

ACTIVITY D: Work with NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Fishery Management Council, Coastal Treaty Tribes and other partners to monitor compliance with EFH regulations in the Sanctuary.

ACTIVITY E: Work with the USCG and Canadian Coast Guard to promote continued compliance with the ATBA. **[Note: this activity could also be included in a Spills action plan.]**

- Conduct monthly processing of Canadian Coast Guard radar data to evaluate voluntary compliance and identify vessels that travel within the ATBA.
- For areas outside of the Canadian Coast Guard radar coverage acquire and review Automatic Information System (AIS) plots from the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound.
- Send a letter with joint U.S. Coast Guard and OCNMS signatures to non-compliant vessels.
- Provide compliance data to Washington Department of Ecology for publication in their annual Vessel Entry and Transit (VEAT) report.
- Maintain the OCNMS web site with current ATBA background and compliance tracking data.

PARTNERS: Canadian Coast Guard; Marine Exchange of Puget Sound, USCG, WA Department of Ecology, NOAA Fisheries, Coastal Treaty Tribes, WA Department of Natural Resources, WDFW

RESOURCES: Staff time

STRATEGY OPS9: Maintain and improve enforcement of OCNMS's regulations.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

To protect resources in the Sanctuary by engaging state and federal law enforcement agencies in enforcing OCNMS's regulations (since OCNMS does not have its own law enforcement staff).

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:

ACTIVITY A: Develop training opportunities for law enforcement professionals (e.g., job aids, seminars, ride-a-longs) to promote understanding of cultural and natural resources in the Sanctuary and the OCNMS regulations that protect them.

ACTIVITY B: Maintain bi-annual meetings with law enforcement staff (as described in the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement 2009 report).

ACTIVITY C: Encourage increased presence of NOAA OLE and WDFW law enforcement in the Sanctuary.

ACTIVITY D: Work with NOAA OLE and the ONMS to clarify OCNMS enforcement needs.

ACTIVITY E: Promote active enforcement of the no-discharge regulation as it applies to abandoned vessels.

PARTNERS: NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, USCG, WDFW

RESOURCES: NOAA – WDFW Joint Enforcement Agreement, staff time

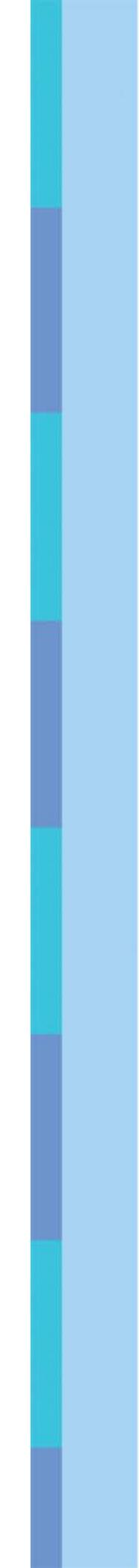
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

STRATEGY OPS10: Report annually on OCNMS's progress in implementing the management plan.

WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME OF THIS STRATEGY?

Ensure that the management plan is a transparent document and promote effective implementation of the management plan.

ACTIVITIES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STRATEGY:



ACTIVITY A: Report on specific performance measures identified in the management plan.

ACTIVITY B: Report on OCNMS's response to emerging issues that were not anticipated in the management plan.

ACTIVITY C: Document any clarifications, enhancements or recommended changes to existing strategies and activities.

ACTIVITY D: Develop outreach materials (e.g., report, presentations, pamphlets, posters) that can be used by OCNMS staff, AC and IPC members to convey information about management plan implementation to partners, stakeholders and constituent groups.

PARTNERS: AC, IPC

RESOURCES: Staff time