

ICM in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

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Abstract

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is part of a marine sanctuary system administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States Department of Commerce. Encompassing more than 5,300 square miles, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary is the nation's largest marine sanctuary and the second largest marine protected area in the world - after the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

This paper will highlight some of the extraordinary features of the Monterey Bay region, discuss goals and objectives of the Sanctuary program, and describe how the Sanctuary program is developing cooperative management strategies with the community to establish an integrated coastal management program for the region.

The MBNMS is unique in many ways. Designated as a marine sanctuary in 1992 for its pristine waters and abundance of wildlife, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary is fortunate to possess one of North America's largest submarine canyons - an area so rich in diversity that it serves as habitat to hundreds of marine species. The MBNMS is also one of the most scenic places in the United States, making it an attractive destination for thousands of visitors each year. Unfortunately, as the human population increases, so do the demands on the coastal zone and Sanctuary resources.

The mission of the Sanctuary program is to manage and protect the natural resources within its boundaries so that the region's ecological and cultural integrity is preserved for present and future generations. Specifically, the four goals of the Sanctuary program are 1) resource protection; 2) research; 3) education, and 4) managing multiple-use. The MBNMS strives to accomplish these goals by working closely with the local communities in a way that builds communication and cooperation. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary would never have been established was it not for remarkable citizen involvement and regional political support. As a result, the public shares in resource management decisions through the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

The Sanctuary Advisory Council was established to advise and assist the Sanctuary manager in making decisions that affect the marine environment. Composed of individuals representing the various constituencies of the MBNMS, the Sanctuary Advisory Council serves as a forum for the public to provide input to the Sanctuary program. Over the years, the Council has helped the Sanctuary pursue solutions to multiple-use conflicts, enforcement issues, permit processing, and various aspects of

water quality. The Sanctuary Advisory Council is supported by working groups dedicated to resource protection, research, and education.

The MBNMS also spearheaded the development of a comprehensive Water Quality Protection Program for the Monterey Bay region. The effort is a partnership between Federal, State, and local agencies, along with several public and private groups. The purpose of the program is to enhance and protect water quality in the Sanctuary and its watersheds.

The MBNMS has fostered and earned the public trust. The Sanctuary currently enjoys the support of a general public that is engaged and informed about marine issues. Moreover, previously antagonistic groups are now cooperating to find solutions to problems such as regulating vessel traffic and kelp harvesting in the MBNMS. Equally important is that the Sanctuary and other marine related programs are strongly supported by an educated contingent of politicians at the local, regional, State, and Federal levels.

By adhering to the basic tenants of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), the MBNMS is facilitating a powerful and responsive method of government; thus, ensuring the protection of precious Sanctuary resources for present and future generations.