

Superintendent's Report to the SAC, April 17, 2020

First and foremost, I hope that all of you, and your friends and families, are safe, healthy, and coping well with the stresses of shelter orders and distancing, closed businesses and offices, and the daily news reports that can cause heightened anxiety, fear, and confusion. We at MBNMS remain diligent in carrying out our mission as best as we possibly can. We may be shut in, but we are not shut down! We are all working from home offices and staying connected through many phone conferences, and virtual meetings. We are responding to emergencies and enforcement issues as safety allows and appropriate. As you can imagine, we are not able at this time to operate our visitor centers, conduct regular missions at sea, or even conduct field research. We had to cancel Snapshot Day this year as well as various other meetings. We are adjusting to this new work environment and modifying work plans and activities and planning for resumed operations.

I am sorry we could not hold our April SAC meeting. I know you all will miss my wise cracks and bad jokes! I appreciate everyone who was able to send in member and group announcements. Nichole has done a great job of pulling together a packet of information for you in lieu of the SAC meeting. I hope you get a lot out of it.

Looking ahead, we will hold our June 19 SAC meeting, most likely virtually through a webinar of some type (to be announced as we get into late May or early June). I fully anticipate that meeting entirely focused on our Management Plan Review documents (Plan, Proposed Rule, and Environmental Assessment). We have a mid-May target date for release and start of a 60-day public review process. We will send out an announcement when we know the publish date in the Federal Register. We will also be scheduling a special meeting (also likely a webinar) in June or July focused on the proposed offshore wind energy project off Morro Bay and our southernmost boundary. The California Energy Commission (CEC) and Dept of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) are seeking SAC feedback on this issue. Bill Douros and I have been participating in a working group made of staff from CEC, BOEM, US Navy, offices of Congressmen Carbajal and Panetta, and California Resources Agency to consider possible offshore areas for potential wind farm development.

Birds are enjoying peaceful beaches, Harbor seals are pupping, grey whales are migrating, our sanctuary still teems with life, and it calls to us to ensure its continued protection, exploration and research, and sharing its wonders with the public. We will get through this, and be back to our critically important offices, businesses and operations at some point, hopefully soon. In the mean time, be safe, stay healthy, and be good to each other! Please feel free to reach out to me. Send me an email or call (831-241-4217). I would love to hear from you.