

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Research Activity Panel (RAP)

History of the RAP

- In 1988, Congressman Leon Panetta formed a Research Steering Committee with the purpose of discussing the possible designation of a Sanctuary to protect the Central California coast from offshore oil development. From these meetings, an informal subcommittee, the Marine Lab Committee, was gathered on January 12, 1989.
- The Marine Lab Committee, comprised of scientists from six local institutions, was the foundation of the region's marine research network. Through their discussions, the committee recognized the importance of sound scientific research in establishing and managing a Sanctuary. This group provided insight on potential boundaries for Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) and to provide insight into the region's living resources.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) was designated in 1992.
- The Marine Lab Committee decided to create a permanent research committee for the region and expanded to include all the major research institutions in the area. Representatives from the original six institutions, with 13 additional institutions, officially formed the MBNMS Research Advisory Committee in 1993.
- The Research Advisory Committee wrote a "Scientific Research Plan for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary" in September 1993. The purpose of this plan was to coordinate the existing research programs and address resource management issues. The plan targets five major categories: (1) existing knowledge, (2) monitoring, (3) experimental studies, (4) modeling, and (5) information management. These categories are applied to the many habitats found within the Sanctuary including estuaries, rocky shores, sandy beaches, kelp forests, continental shelf, canyons, deep sea and open ocean.
- In 1994, the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) was made a working group under the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC).
- Later in 1994, the Research Advisory Committee was renamed the Research Activity Panel (RAP) in order to comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. While monthly RAP meetings are always open to the public, this change meant the meetings would no longer have to be announced in advance to the public, or adhere to other federal committee rules that the SAC does.
- In 2006, "RAP Purpose and Protocols" finalized, and membership reorganized to include representative disciplines and institutions.
- The RAP currently includes 23 representatives who meet four times per year.