



NORTH AMERICAN MPA PRACTITIONERS' EXCHANGE

AN INITIATIVE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MPA NETWORK

Draft

Project Summary

The ecological linkages between MPAs – including migratory patterns and life history stages of various species – suggests the need for improved collaboration in the establishment and management of MPAs. A network of MPAs provides better protection of marine biodiversity than can be achieved by managing MPAs in isolation. The North American Marine Protected Areas Network, coordinated by the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in collaboration with IUCN's/World Commission on Protected Areas' North American Marine Working Group, aims to enhance and strengthen the conservation of marine biodiversity in critical marine habitats throughout North America by creating functional linkages and information exchange among existing marine protected areas.

The North American MPA Network, was catalysed by a tri-national, multi-disciplinary workshop in November 1999, which subsequently produced proceedings and an associated Action Plan framework (available at the following web site:

http://www.orchestrabycrossdraw.com/marinet/Notice.cfm?Notice_ID=39)

The Action Plan framework included seven areas of recommended action:

- Valuing Economic Benefits of MPAs
- Mapping Marine and Estuarine Ecosystems of North America
- Guidelines for Measuring MPA Effectiveness
- Integrated Management Planning
- Expanding Applied Research for MPAs
- Developing an Ocean Ethic
- Protection Standards.

Activities are now being initiated to implement the majority of them. Some have a North American-wide focus and others on the sub-region of the Pacific Coast of North America, also known as the Baja California-Golfo de California to Bering Sea (B2B) region.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this initiative is to establish a permanent network of North American MPAs to enhance and strengthen the protection of marine biodiversity in North America by linking the existing MPAs in all three countries. Specifically the initiative seeks to:

- protect critical marine and coastal habitats and North American biodiversity by sharing effective conservation approaches and by developing cross-cutting conservation initiatives;
- enhance collaboration among the three countries to address common challenges inherent to the protection of marine biodiversity, as well as to jointly prioritize conservation actions;
- build regional, national and international capacity to conserve critical marine and coastal habitats by sharing lessons learned, new technologies and management strategies, as well as by increasing access to relevant information; and
- facilitate the future design and establishment of a globally representative system of MPAs throughout North American and the world, as called for by IUCN.

Objectives of the Exchange

Through the exchanges, MPA practitioners will have the opportunity to:

- Identify MPA management needs and opportunities;
- Identify common tools and mechanisms for collaboration;
- Identify commonalities (themes, practices); and
- Develop the basis for a permanent communication network between MPA practitioners.

Description of the Exchange

During this first stage of the project, practitioners from each of the following MPAs will be selected to travel to one MPA in Canada, and another in the US:

- Parque Nacional Cancún (Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancún, y Punta Nizuc)
- Reserva de la Biosfera Alto Golfo de California y Delta del Rio Colorado
- Parque Nacional Bahía de Loreto
- Reserva de la Biosfera Sian Ka'an
- Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Islas del Golfo de California- (Guaymas)
- Parque Nacional Arrecifes de Cozumel

MPAs in Canada and the US will be selected based upon the interests and needs of the MPA practitioners, taking into consideration the limitations of the project, as well as the needs of the different agencies involved. One week will be spent in each of the two MPAs selected.

Flight, food, lodging, and incidentals will be covered by the different organisations involved.

Suggested topics to be covered:

- **Administration:** management, administration, funding, governance, information systems related to administration, staff evaluation/performance, planning
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** bioinformatic systems, inventories, monitoring, database management, field studies, pure and applied scientific research
- **Surveillance and Enforcement:** zoning, protection standards, surveillance, law enforcement, regulations
- **Services and Activities:** IMP, sustainable use, recreation, tourism, fishing, management of economic activities permitted in or related to the MPA
- **Community Involvement:** outreach campaigns, public education programs, communication tools, use of the media, services, community involvement in development and management of the MPA

Note:

- Exchanges must be complete by the last week of January 2002.
- It is our goal to have to results of the exchanges presented and discussed during the MPA Practitioners Meeting.