

Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

Public Meeting Transcript – Comment Period (Virtual)

October 4, 2023 | 5:30 – 7:30 ET

Number of Attendees: 15

Captain Jim Kendall 23:36

Yeah, thank you for allowing me to ask my questions here. Can you tell me how many people attended the first public meeting and of the 22 that are shown here as participants today, how many of them are the general public and how many of them were working with the service or some portion of the service?

Jessica Miller 23:58

I'm not sure that we have that immediately available. I think we can say there were four members of the public at the first meeting. And I believe there are seven out of 23 people who are related to the project, if I'm not mistaken, and please do correct me if I'm wrong, Britney or Lauren or, or Marianne. Believe seven. So that's

Marianne Randall 24:21

For just for NOAA Fisheries. It's just Cori and I so there's just two of us tonight. For tonight, just Cori Kane and myself are representing NOAA Fisheries.

Captain Jim Kendall 24:33

Right but there's others available who are working here as on on the project itself, how many how many civilians? When I say civilians are I mean attendants do you know?

Jessica Miller 24:45

Well, we don't know everyone on the list, but what I can see is that there are 15 people who are here as members of the public or to listen,

Captain Jim Kendall 24:55

That's better way of putting in the public. I commented online to Brittany several times about this. First of all, I don't think that there's adequate information or publication of the meetings coming and I was particularly bothered by the live person or in person meetings with no virtual access. And you said there

were four people present at the first meeting. You've got to realize that in live meetings have a terrible draw lately. And on subjects like this with a lot of people that are not even aware of what's going on their virtual meetings will provide you a much larger audience if and when you give them the appropriate timelines and, and communication less on this but thank you for making my point here on this.

Jessica Miller 25:52

Thanks for your comments, Jim. Are there any other questions about the process or the management plan or meetings or anything else? Chasis?

S Chasis 26:05

I thank you very much. I just had a couple of questions. One is for shipping, you say it's something that you're not addressing in the plan, is that right? And then could it be the subject of a future step down plan is that is it in the same category in that regard as submarine cables? What are you envisioning? Are you going to be evaluating the effects of shipping on the monument during the 15 year period of the plan of the initial plan, but reserving whether you would there would be future action in a subsequent plan or what can you elaborate on that? And then I had another question after you answer that.

Jessica Miller 26:52

I'm wondering if maybe Marianne. Are you able to address this or Brittany?

Marianne Randall 26:59

Sure. It's something that's not necessarily under our authorities to manage. So as you said it would be more looking at what the impact would be. Seeing what the user groups are in the monument, including shipping. But it's not necessarily under authority to manage that's why it was not specifically addressed in the plan. Brittany, do you have anything to add?

Brittany Petersen 27:26

No, I think you covered it, Marianne.

Jessica Miller 27:30

Thanks so much for your question.

S Chasis 27:33

Okay. And then the other is essentially for regulated uses. Are you relying on the existing permitting system? Are you or that wasn't totally clear from your description. Or are you envisioning new permits potentially for regulated activities?

Marianne Randall 27:57

So the permits that exist across the region, not just in the monument for NOAA Fisheries, would still apply. If there's a permit for an activity allowed in the monument that is not permanent under NOAA Fisheries, and it is not done by NOAA Fisheries or by Fish and Wildlife Service then the US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to have a special use permit applied to that activity.

S Chasis 28:24

And what what are such activities? Are there examples of such activities or what, you know, what is that potentially going to include?

Marianne Randall 28:35

So for example, research that's maybe done by a university or third party that's not research done by NOAA or by Fish and Wildlife Service, and they didn't have a NOAA Fisheries permit. I'm going to toss this on over to Brittany too because they're the ones proposing that special use permit, so I think they have a better idea of what's compatible with that.

Brittany Petersen 29:00

Yeah, so that's a good example Marianne, so things like research that are not currently permitted by NOAA. Under it within the easy would fall under the US Fish and Wildlife Service research permit, special use permit. And so then researchers would submit a permit or through the online app, or I think we're developing an online application and follow the normal procedures like we would on a normal on a typical National Wildlife Refuge unit. But that's an example of filming commercial filming was another one that doesn't include marine mammals and yeah, it probably based on-- what what NOAA doesn't permit we'll be looking to permit if applicable.

Jessica Miller 29:51

Thanks so much for your questions. Thank you. Any other questions that Brittany or Marianne can address now about the management plan? Any logistics timing, upcoming meetings? Joseph, go ahead.

Joseph Gordon 30:08

Thanks. A similar question. I'm wondering AIS or VMS it seems like that isn't going to be required within the area and wondering if that's for the same reason as authority but I wanted to ask and follow-up on that.

Marianne Randall 30:31

I don't know the specifics of that. That's something we look at for user groups. I can't speak to that and it's not necessarily in a plan that's a requirement of the area so I'll have to look more into that and see it exactly what we say in the plan.

Jessica Miller 30:53

Thanks Marianne. Chasis, it seems you have another question?... No?

S.Chasis 31:03

Sorry, I just forgot to lower my hand.

Jessica Miller 31:09

Oh, no problem! Thank you. Thanks, Joseph, for your question. Any other additional question is for Brittany or Marianne the presentation the management plan timing any of that. Any questions for Marianne and her Brittany OK one last call any questions for Marianne or Brittany about the presentation so I think what we're gonna do now is transition into the public comment period of the meeting. And so, we'll be collecting feedback and input for the manage monuments and manage and you can submit questions, you can submit comments. All of that will be we'll be heading into the record for this meeting we ask that you follow the instructions on the PowerPoint slide in terms of some general methods for methods for taking part of of this verbal comment period we ask first that you use the raise hand function so that we can call on you and we'll add you to the queue and also confirm that you'd like to submit comment. If you're calling in you can dial star 9. That's only if you want to submit a comment or verbally submit something. But use star 9 if you're reaching us from the phone will help you get there. To raise hand function and we'll call on you and then we'll ask you to unmute yourself and then we're asking for everyone initially to take 3 minutes or less to submit your comment or question after that once we've reached everyone who's wanted to submit a comment or question we'll come back and if there's additional questions that take over that three minute limit we're absolutely happy to accept those. We had this meeting till about 8:00 PM I believe oh I'm sorry 7:30 please correct me if I'm wrong I may have misspoke there we have a while so we do have some time and can be flexible about that timing does anyone have any initial comments or questions that they would like to submit in reference to the management plan happy to take any and all questions or comments. Any questions or comments for the management plan in response to the management plan. I think these will be submitted for the

record so Brittany and Marianne won't necessarily be able to respond to these questions period but if you'd like then recorded and submitted as part of the record we encourage you to come off mute or raise your hand at this time. Or if you're having any technical issues make sure you message Anna or come off mute um we are here we want you to be able to participate if you'd like to. Thanks Anna is sending you oh you're sending the regulations.gov OK that's the way that you can submit a written comment as Marianne suggested earlier period this is a direct link that takes you right there so if you don't want to use the QR code in the presentation you can directly copy this link and reach regulations.gov to submit a written comment there. But are there any verbal comments that anyone would like to submit at this time. Beyond the three minutes anyone can go beyond I don't wanna limit anyone because they're afraid of speaking up and going beyond the three minutes we've got time. Sure go ahead Jim.

Captain Jim Kendall 35:49

I yeah, I'm probably one of the few if the not only commercial fishermen in attendance here. If I'm not I'm sorry I didn't recognize any of the other names. I've fished for 30 years and I've been an industry advocate now for another 20 something years. And I've got to tell you that the imposition of putting a public monument or a National Monument out at sea where it really doesn't affect anyone other than the fishermen it's a strange proposition. I could understand if there was mobile gear being trawled back and forth across these areas and causing some sort of irreparable harm to the environment. You've got to realize that the fishermen depend on the environment so that they have an occupation in future years period without a healthy environment we don't have that. So i just want people to realize that i'm not opposed to protecting the environment but but there are times there that you can smother the protection and caused some harm to some particular reason. And one of the few fisheries that I even know worked those areas is the deep sea crab fishery that we have here on the East Coast. Some years back I was a participant in a group while we were looking to get permits for red crab fishery off the cost here. Time we couldn't get those because there was no information available as to the health and size of the fishery or the population. So that was turned down for some years and then finally they a commercial fishery did start up offshore it's healthy it's been fishing these areas for how many years now let's see about 30 years with no documented proof of harm. In fact there's very little documentation of these areas other than some videos that show you what's on the bottom. And like i said no one that i know of other than a few fishermen have access to this area yet in this presentation you several times referred to the public visitation to these areas. I mean come on you're out in the middle of the ocean and you're gonna call them visitors and what they're gonna see or gain from this public monument. Resolve it public monument i mean there's much more serious things that need resolving rather than stepping out and getting something like this because the president decided to use a decree to create it. Then the next president who came in actually cancelled it. Then the third president came in and reinserted the same declaration for protection. So these are just they're not really truly based on science and reasonable protection because they don't really understand what the resources are out there. So I'm just trying to make that point that your presentation is good but it makes it sound like something that we're gonna be able to measure. There's no way we're ever gonna be able to measure this. This is not Yellowstone that your referring to. The amount of activity that's going on out there can't even compare to the access just getting onto Yellowstone. It's it's a lot of to do, basically... I hate to say it like this to do about nothing. Like I said we're not going to be able to justify it at some point in time for the amount of

time and effort that's being put out there other than just assuming that we can. Because like I said there are very few bits of information that are available to mostly anyone. Like i said thank you for letting me go on about this because it just it just bothers me.

Jessica Miller 40:12

Thank you, Jim, so much for submitting your comment we appreciate it. Jason Cofield go ahead.

Jason Cofield 40:20

I first want to thank captain Jim for his comment. I can relate to his concerns. Also our concerns as a tribal nation when the presidents are making these decisions on ancestral waters as they are now, it affects us as well, so we want to make sure that we are part of the permitting process and that we're included in all facets.

Jessica Miller 40:49

Thank you so much Jason for your comment. Ddoes anyone else have any comments? Again, we're here to hear and again we're here to hear any and all comments so if there's anything anyone would like to share, please do raise your hand and we'll call on you. Caroline, go ahead. Oh, was that a mistake hand? I just want to make sure I'm not missing you.

Caroline Driscoll 41:48

There I am. I'm unmuted. I think you have done a wonderful job of coordinating multiple concerns and I must admit that I come from southeastern Connecticut and fishing is a concern and I totally support Jim's concerns about fishing rights and fishing permits. I think it ought to be a really big consideration as long as they don't damage the park. Okay, because I think that is our priority concern. Okay, thank you.

Jessica Miller 40:54

Thank you for your comments, Caroline. We really appreciate it. Anyone else have any comments or questions they'd like to submit. Oh, I'm sorry – go ahead, Jim.

Captain Jim Kendall 43:10

Yeah, I'm sorry that was inadvertent. But while I have the chance, I'd like to say thanks for both follow-up comments. This is basically an unseen issue that very few people that are not involved in the fishing industry even know about. And it's like a lot of things—what we're given to consider is we have very little

information about it. And unfortunately, like I said before, even the science on this is miniscule and like is side, it seems an inappropriate action at a bad time.

Jessica Miller 43:52

I appreciate your comments. Thank you, Jim. Does anybody else have questions or comments. Oh, Caroline, go ahead.

Caroline Driscoll 44:59

Yeah, I'm back again only because I am rather concerned that there are only – well there were 20, well there were 20 and one bugged out. Only 20 participants in this conversation and I really feel there ought to be a whole lot more.

Jessica Miller 44:20

Thanks for your comments, Caroline.

Caroline Driscoll 44:22

And I don't know how you deal with that, okay, because I know you are trying your best. Thank you.

Jessica Miller 44:31

Thanks for your comments, we appreciate it. And noted. Jason, go ahead.

Jason Cofield 44:42

I'm back again. I want to say thank you for that, Caroline, as well. And I can relate to you guys for putting this on and I know how difficult it is to get people to come out one, in person, and especially now back into a Zoom type setting. So, I do appreciate that you have put this meeting out there and again, this is one of these things, and Captain Jim can tell you, only people who are really interested in this, in this particular case... In my instance, I see us as a tribal nation. And Jim, as a constituent that makes a living out there, those are only two you're really gonna see. The average citizen isn't really going to participate in this. So, in this particular case, Jim's voice is very, very, very important. And so are the tribal nations. I appreciate you guys reaching out and I know you do a great job of trying to put out the information for everyone. But again, only those who are really dedicated to this--Jim spent his you know, 30- actually 50 years he quoted, has been involved in this industry. And this is a lifelong industry for my ancestral people. So, we're really the only ones that are going to really be paying attention. So, thank you for putting this together.

Jessica Miller 46:08

Thank you for coming and thank you for your comment. Anyone else have questions or comments they'd like to submit? Happy to hear from anyone who wants to come off mute. Sure, Captain Jim, go ahead.

Captain Jim Kendall 46:37

Since there's so few people here to comment, as Jason just mentioned, what surprises me the most is I don't see any of the players from the red crab fishery in attendance. Like I say, I might have missed their names, but those are the people who are basically most severely or only the ones that have been impacted by these particular restrictions involved. I think you said I might have missed it or misconstrued it, but at some point, I think in the presentation, you mentioned that there might be a possibility for applying for permits to fish these areas. And for the people that don't know, let me explain that the red crab fishery is just it's a trap fishery where they drop pots similar to lobster pots down to the bottom. And when I say bottom, I'm talking over 1000 feet, quite a ways over 1000 feet in some places, where, like I say, there's no other fishing activity that I know of touching the bottom or impacting the bottom. So like I say, it's a very unknown issue, except for the people that actually fish there. And if you spoke to someone in the general public, they think that I preserved like this or National Monument like this is fine and it doesn't impact anyone. That's not quite true. And it's just like having a national monuments on shore, they're there for use and protection. And just by virtue of being able to access those areas, you're probably having multitude times of impact on that area as the fishermen who actually fish these particular this particular monument. The sea mounts are unfishable, those a mountain peaks. So like I say, there's very little information put out there to the general public. The few of the general public in attendance, who would understand what you're trying to protect and what you're protecting it from. So they would all assume that you know, any protections handed down are great, and there's no one impacted. But that's not quite true. So like I say, I'm surprised some of those people aren't here to really speak up about this because I do know several of them quite well. And I know that they were really bothered by the Act being imposed upon the fishing industry. And again, like I say, Thanks for the opportunity.

Jessica Miller 49:13

Thanks, Jim. Yes, Carolyn, do you have another question?

Caroline Driscoll 49:17

I am back here. Do I have to do something? Can you hear me?

Jessica Miller 49:22

We can hear you.



Caroline Driscoll 49:23

Okay, great. Thank you to the last speaker. I don't know who it is because it didn't register on my screen. However, you voiced a lot of local concerns, okay. And I am not in this industry. Okay, I'm a tree person. But I love southeastern Connecticut, and I support all of its endeavors and I really wonder why south of the oyster industry in southeastern Connecticut hasn't gotten involved. The the fisheries in Southington or, not Southington, why do I want to call... in Southeaster Connecticut haven't gotten involved. You know, there are a whole lot of entities that ought to be involved in this whole scene. That aren't and why aren't they? Okay, I leave it with you.

Jessica Miller 50:51

A good question. Thank you, Caroline. Any other comments or questions anyone would like to submit? Happy to hear from anyone who wants to put their hand up or at this point come off mute on your own. We're a small group, small group, so happy to take any and all comments. Anyone out there with a comment or question that you'd like to submit for the record? I mentioned this before, but I know that you know we're recording this. I know we mentioned that but we're recording this so that we can have a transcript of all of this so that will be publicly available. So any and all comments that are submitted verbally today will be transcribed and then submitted and eventually be up on the website so that you can take a look at all these comments. Any additional comments or questions that anyone has that you know you want to make sure are recorded as part of this process. We're happy to hear them. I think one last, oh, Caroline, come off mute. Caroline, did you have a question or comment? May have been a mistake on accident. But Caroline, if you do have a question or comment, please do unmute yourself.

Caroline Driscoll 53:17

Okay. I think that we have not resolved the problem. And there are enough questions presented at this meeting and that there needs to be another Zoom meeting.

Jessica Miller 53:33

I can respond to that there are additional zoom meetings beyond this one. And that's the last thing that we'll cover in this meeting. So if there are no further comments or questions for the record, that's what we'll be moving on to but I want to give people one last shot to please submit their comment or question verbally otherwise they can do so in a written format.

Caroline Driscoll 53:57

I totally understand.

Jessica Miller 54:00

Any other comments or questions from anyone in the group? Okay, so not seeing any hands and not hearing anyone come off mute. I think we'll move on to finally, sharing more information about how to submit a comment. One last reminder. And if you can go to the next slide, Anna. Oh, I'm sorry. If you can go back to the slide. Sorry about that. The virtual and in person meetings. So we have upcoming meetings, two in person meetings and two additional virtual meetings next week on the 10th of October at 530 to 730. The same timeframe will be in Providence Rhode Island it roshambo library. And then we'll be in Portsmouth New Hampshire at the Portsmouth public library on Wednesday the 18th at the same timeframe from 530 to 7:30pm. And then virtual meetings, October 13. And that one's during the daytime so noon to 2:30pm. And then on Monday, October 23 from 530 to 730 during this timeframe again, and if you can go back up one more slide with the links the links and the QR codes for the Management Plan website and also a link in a QR code that will take you directly to the place where you can submit a written formal comment about the management plan and any reflections you have on it. We really appreciate all of your comments and appreciate you being here to listen and to contribute to the conversation. And we hope that you'll consider coming to additional meetings or also, you know submitting a written comment via the second link. If there are any additional questions I can answer about any of these logistical matters, please let me know or if anyone has any last thoughts they'd like to submit for the record and please come off mute now's the time. Otherwise, we'll likely ending this meeting a little early. So we're happy to take your comments. Captain Jim, Go ahead.

Captain Jim Kendall 56:26

Guess who? [laughs]. I'd like to ask if, I guess Brittany would probably be the best one I've been in contact with her by email. I already asked if you please send me the number of attendees at these two live meetings. I will be attending the online meetings of course, but I don't attend any live meetings. And I'm not quite sure how many people will but I'd appreciate an email, just drop me a line and tell me how many people were in attendance.

Brittany Petersen 57:06

Happy to give you a call anytime.

Jessica Miller 57:12

Thanks, Jim. Any other questions or comments? Oh, sure. Marianne, go ahead.

Marianne Randall 57:19

This is just a clarification. I think it was Mr. Gordon's comment on AIS and BMS. So just wanted to clarify that any permits that have that is an existing requirement, that will continue to be collected in and

around the monument as it applies. But at this time and in the management plan, that's not something we're requiring for entry into the monument. So just wanted to better clarify that for him.

Jessica Miller 57:45

Oh, thanks. Joseph, Did you did you get that?

Joseph Gordon 57:53

I got it. It would help to understand maybe why? Is that like an authority issue? Because for scientific research alone, you'd want to know all the activity within the monument and also for our sort of monitoring enforcement.

Marianne Randall 58:10

It's not something we addressed at this stage in the management plan. But we can take that into consideration as a comment for the final plan or step down plan.

Jessica Miller 58:25

Yeah, and it will, it'll be part of the record for this meeting Joseph. So, appreciate it. Any other comments or questions? Sorry if I sound like a broken record, just want to make sure everybody gets their time to submit a comment here and we appreciate all of you for coming off mute and sharing your thoughts and sharing your comments. And like I said, the transcript from this will be available up on the website at some point and we do encourage you to submit written comments or visit the monument Management Plan website. So, you can get more information about the management plan, and you can look at the entire plan. And one thing I can note about the plan is it may look like a giant, giant plan to you when you're downloading it. But it's really in actuality about 20 pages with a lot of appendices. So, it's not a huge lift to read the 20 pages. Just want to throw that out there. It's more consumable than it may initially appear. So, we do encourage you to go there and download the management plan and take a look. And then consider submitting a written comment and also consider coming to any of the other virtual or in person public meetings that are coming up to discuss the exact same thing but it looks like Brittany, you have a comment?

Brittany Petersen 59:50

Just to add onto it because I personally like [shows printed copy] – oh we can't even see it - but we do have printed copies too. So, if anyone is interested in having a printed copy, I'm happy to send it to you just send me a message with your address to the planning email and happy to send that over to you because if you're like me, I like something tangible and paper and something to write on. So, I'm happy to do that.

Jessica Miller 1:00:15

And you'll have those at the in person meetings, as well, I believe right?

Brittany Petersen 1:00:18

Exactly. Yeah.

Jessica Miller 1:00:22

Okay, well, we want to thank everybody for coming and for submitting your comments really appreciate you showing up and being here to listen and also to share your thoughts with us. So thank you very much. And I hope everybody has a nice evening. I think we're going to end this meeting a little early. One last call for any additional comments before we close out Okay, well thank you. So much. Thanks, everybody, and have a good evening. Take care.