

Brief Summary of Scoping Comments 4/25/13

A notice was published in the *Federal Register* on 12/12/12 regarding NOAA's proposal to consider boundary expansion of Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries and intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and hold scoping meetings, with a scoping comment period to 3/1/13.

More than 300 submissions were received and are posted on Regulations.gov under docket number NOAA-NOS-2012-0228. Some submissions, such as the compilations of scoping meeting input provided orally and submissions with letters attached, include multiple comments in a single posted submission.

Commenters provided input for the scope of the DEIS, including significant environmental issues. Submissions came from government agencies, organizations, members of elected bodies, and individuals. A number of people voiced opinions of support or lack of support for the concept of boundary expansion for the two sanctuaries as described in the *Federal Register* notice, or about one or more of the topics listed below. Below is a brief review of a number of the topics raised in the submittals, including:

- Purpose of National Marine Sanctuaries
- Need for the proposed expansion of the sanctuaries and benefits from their expansion
- Authority for NOAA to undertake this process
- Potential alternate sanctuary configurations, ranging from minor changes in area or boundary lines to expanding sanctuary boundaries thousands of miles
- Description of the physical environment related to the proposal, including air quality, climate, oceanography, rivers and streams (ex: Russian River and Alder Creek), water quality, geology, any special physical features, and existing land and sea resource management areas
- Description of the biological environment related to the proposal, including the marine food web, fishes, marine mammals, birds, invasive species and threatened and endangered species
- Description of cultural and historic resources
- Status of human uses as well as effects to/from these human uses, such as:
 - offshore aquaculture
 - offshore energy (oil, gas and alternative energy potential, exploration and development)
 - recreational fishing
 - commercial fishing
 - marine algae harvest
 - recreational boating, including motorized personal watercraft use for recreation/rescue
 - commercial vessel operation
 - tourism
 - aviation
 - mineral extraction
 - placement of dredge spoils
 - fiber optic cables

coastal fireworks displays
desalination plants
sewage and stormwater inputs
military and U.S. Coast Guard uses

- Status of and effects, including disturbance, to wildlife/birds/fish/invertebrates from various activities/stressors, such as vessel and aircraft use, noise and light, seafloor disturbance, seismic testing, energy activities, point and nonpoint pollution from different sources, aquaculture and fishing
- Description of other agencies' authorities, regulations and processes as they relate to the proposed expansion process (and particularly for fishing: Pacific Fishery Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service and California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife)
- Projected working relationships between GFNMS and CBNMS and agencies and groups working in the area to address management issues together
- Explanation of and effects from NOAA's proposed sanctuary regulations for the area, sanctuary permits, exemptions, etc.
- Description of NOAA's enforcement plans
- Sanctuary Advisory Council representation for the area
- Plans for research and monitoring of biological resources and habitats and human uses affecting them
- Plans for habitat restoration
- Plans for education and outreach programs and facilities
- Scoping comment process.

For further information:

This represents an overview of comment topics only. For further information, the comments may be viewed at <http://regulations.gov>. Docket number NOAA-NOS-2012-0228.

For further overall information about the proposed project, go to <http://farallones.noaa.gov/>.