



Update on Key Issues and Activities in the West Coast Region

Presentation to MBNMS Advisory Council, May 2023





Priority Activities Across the West Coast Region



WCR 22-23 Priorities Across Region

1. Whale Conservation
2. Benthic Habitat Conservation
3. Kelp Forest Monitoring & Restoration
4. Web Interface for Condition Reports
5. Climate Change Adaptation
6. Marine Debris
7. Vessel Incidents
8. Blue Economy
9. The “Big Watershed” – USFS and NOAA Sanctuaries Collaborations

Resources Have Increased



ONMS Base Funding up 20% in the Past Two Years

“Investing in America”

1. Kelp Restoration (Greater Farallones Association, \$4.9 million)
2. Marine Debris Removal (NMSF, \$14.9 million [90% in WCR])
3. Ag Fields Plastic (CA Seagrant, \$2.7 million [MB, CI and CH])

Potential Funding for Capital Facilities – awaiting approval

4. MBNMS Office at CSUMB
5. GF Education Facilities at Crissy Field
6. OC Visitor Center



Update on Other Designation Processes



Other Designation Processes



Eastern Region

1. Lake Ontario
2. Hudson Canyon
3. Lake Erie Quadrangle (opens today...)

West Coast Region

1. Chumash Heritage

Pacific Islands Region

1. Papahānaumokuākea
2. Pacific Remote Islands

Complex Scheduling

- So that each advances
- Don't all "come due" at once

Regarding Resources to ONMS

- Acknowledgement that more are needed for designations
- Acknowledgement more resources will be needed to manage the new sites



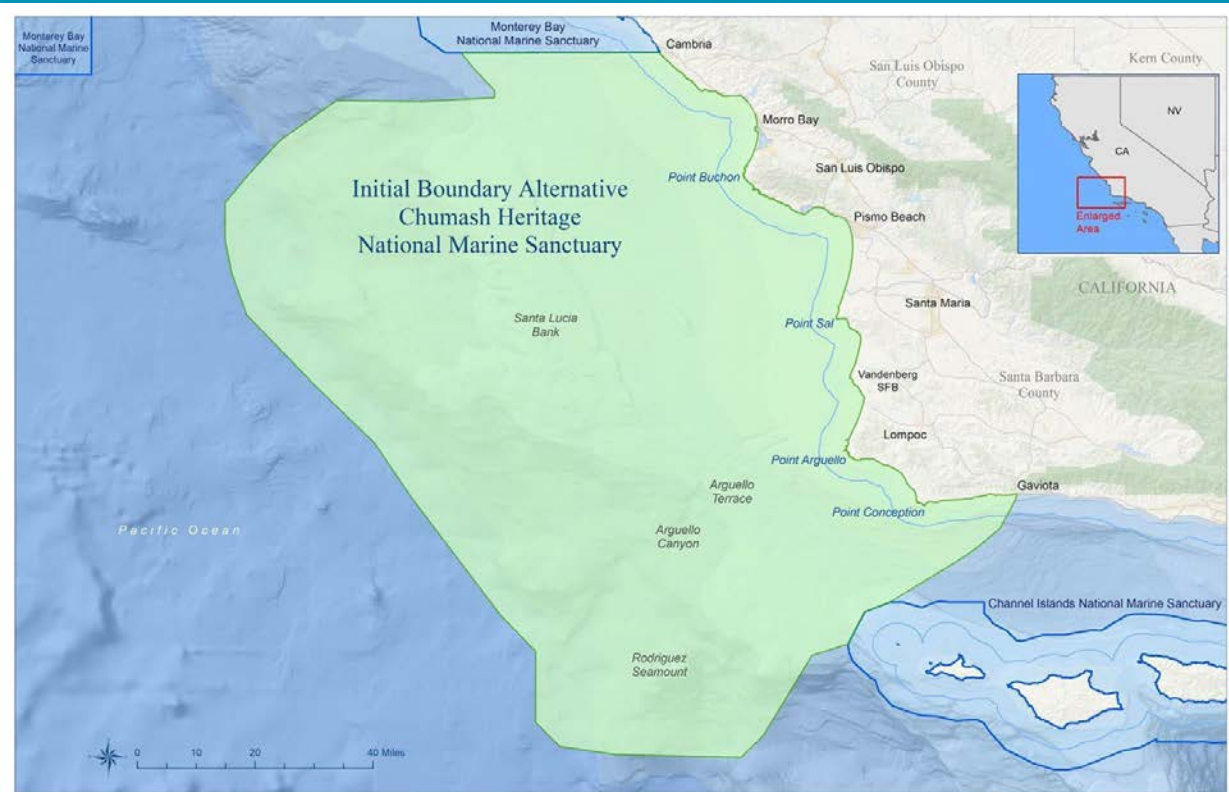
Update on Designation for Proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) Designation



Goals for the Proposed Sanctuary:

1. Manage and increase protection of nationally significant natural, cultural, and historical resources.
2. Guide comprehensive ecosystem-based, community-based management for myriad threats to these resources.
3. Recognize, and aid public awareness of, Indigenous tribal heritage and culture in the area, and facilitate tribal collaborative management.



Background: CHNMS Designation Process



- **Nomination submitted in July 2015**
 - Area was on an inventory of potential sanctuaries since 1983
- **Designation process initiated in November 2021**
 - Received more than 27,000 public scoping comments, most supporting sanctuary designation
- **Designation materials consist of:**
 - Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which includes terms of designation (required by NMSA) and proposed regulations
 - Draft management plan
 - Draft environmental impact statement



Need for the Proposed Action



- **Area is important ecological transition zone with high biological productivity**
 - Supports dense aggregations of marine life, including nationally significant biodiversity of sea birds, marine mammals, invertebrates, and fishes



Need for the Proposed Action



- Area contains hundreds of shipwrecks of historical importance
- Region has been home to coastal, ocean-going Indigenous tribes for tens of thousands of years
 - Submerged village sites may exist along paleoshorelines



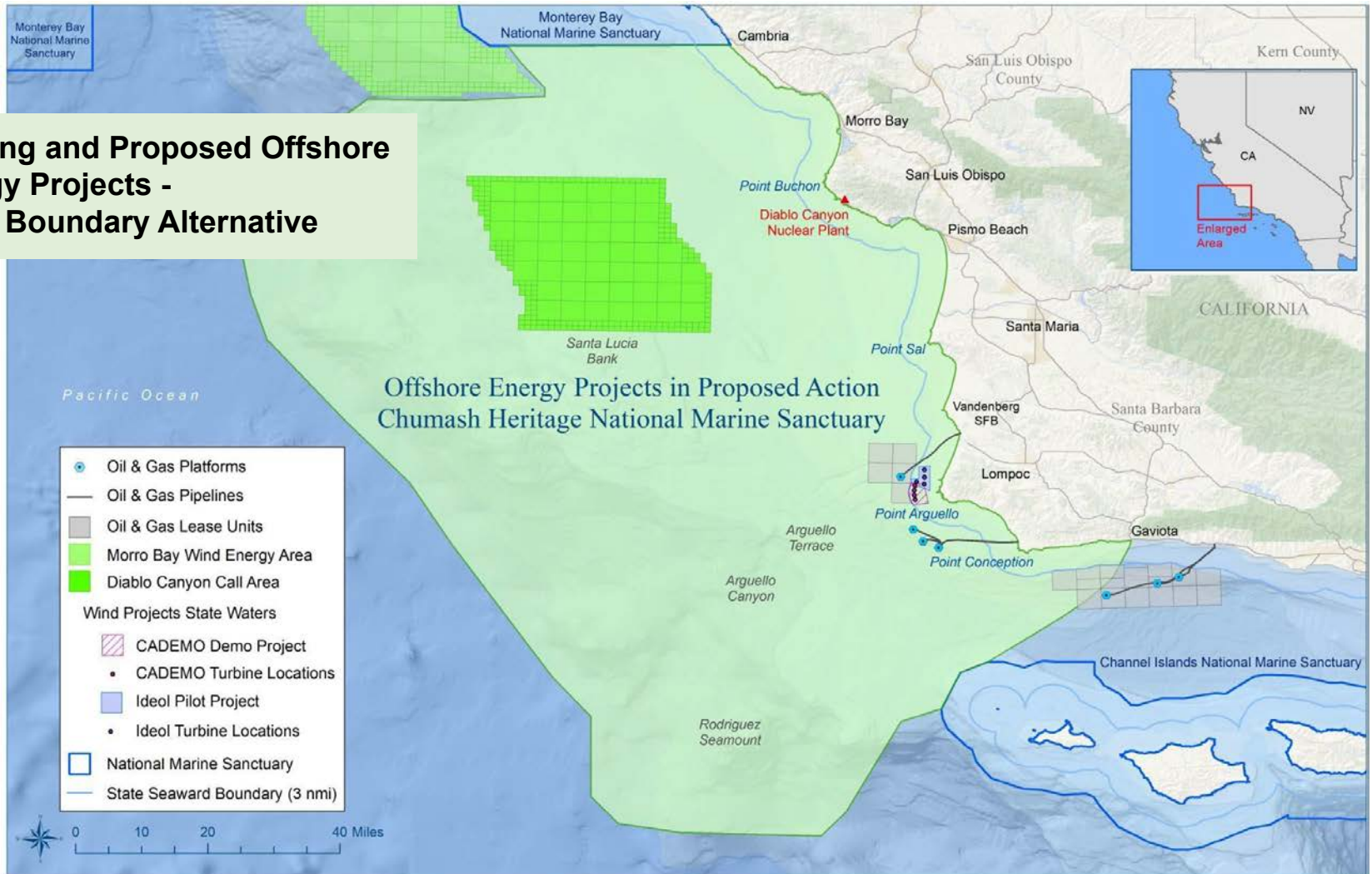
Need for the Proposed Action



- Additional protections are needed due to myriad ongoing and emerging threats to the area from human uses and climate change
 - Offshore energy development
 - Oil and gas (existing & abandonment)
 - Offshore wind (new)
 - Pollution (offshore and onshore sources)
 - Increased vessel traffic and transportation
 - Increased coastal development
 - Climate change



Existing and Proposed Offshore Energy Projects - Initial Boundary Alternative



Designation Process - Key Actions



1. NEPA requires reasonable range of alternatives, which have focused on larger and smaller boundary alternatives with one set of regulations
2. Have held approx. 10 issue-specific virtual workshops (e.g., research, climate change, education, wildlife disturbance, tribal collaborative management)
3. Worked with tribes to create framework for tribal collaborative management
4. Regulations and management plan (non-regulatory actions) tailored to issues and threats specific to this sanctuary
5. Proposed rule is undergoing federal interagency review; NOAA is striving for release by late Spring
6. Anticipate public workshops, followed by public comment meetings this summer, after documents are released

Draft Management Plan Tailored to Issues Specific to Area



Action Plans Under Consideration:

- Indigenous Cultural Heritage
- Climate Change
- Offshore Energy
- Blue Economy
- Education and Outreach
- Research and Monitoring
- Maritime Heritage
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Disturbance
- Resource Protection
- Operations and Admin.



For more information:

sanctuaries.noaa.gov/chumash-heritage/