

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING NOMINATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR DESIGNATION AS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

Background

NOAA has proposed to amend its regulations governing the process for nominating and evaluating sites for eligibility as national marine sanctuaries. This process would guide local communities and other interested parties in providing NOAA with robust, criteria-driven proposals for new national marine sanctuaries.

When should you submit a nomination?

A nomination should be submitted when a broad coalition of community supports believes an area meets a number of the nomination criteria, as identified in the final rule for the nomination process.

What types of information do I need to provide?

Nominations should include a list or characterization of the number and type of supporters for designation (e.g. individual citizens, civic groups, businesses, politicians, local governments, tribal, state, or federal government agencies), and the specific rationale as to why/how it meets each of the relevant criteria.

Nominators should provide enough information to support each statement, and provide documentation, including maps, that support the unique and nationally significant attributes of the nominated area.

When should I submit a sanctuary nomination?

There is currently no deadline for submission. Nominators should submit a nomination when the following two things, at a minimum, are met:

1. A strong rationale as to how the area meets the final criteria; and
2. Community support for a sanctuary representing a diversity of local and regional interests.

How do I make a nomination?

Nomination guidelines are available at any existing sanctuary office around the country, or online at: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>. Once a community feels it has compiled a compelling amount of information, the nomination package should be submitted electronically via Sanctuaries@noaa.gov. If you do not receive a confirmation email with the OMB Collection Number and expiration date, please contact ONMS to ensure that we received your nomination.

How are sanctuary nominations evaluated?

Nominations will be processed in the order received. They will be first reviewed for completeness and adherence to these instructions and general guidelines. Nominees will be contacted for clarification or if nominations are incomplete, or otherwise not in compliance with these instructions. If sanctuary staff requests such additional information, and no response has been received from the nominator within ninety (90) calendar days, the nomination will be

deemed withdrawn, and no further action will be taken on the nomination by the ONMS, and any new nomination for the site will have to be resubmitted.

Complete nominations will be reviewed by ONMS staff to determine if they meet the criteria under 15 CFR Part 922. Nominations may also be peer-reviewed by outside experts and to ensure the appropriateness of the site for nomination.

ONMS will inform the nominator of the status of the nomination following full review of the nomination package.

Will I need to submit additional information?

If a nomination requires supplementary information, ONMS staff will contact the nominator and identify where additional information is needed.

Once a nomination is approved, what should I expect?

If NOAA determines a site meets the criteria for designation as a national marine sanctuary, NOAA may initiate the pre-designation process, including a notice of intent to conduct an environmental impact statement, holding public scoping meetings, and initiating consultation with other relevant Federal and state agencies.

Nomination Process, Solicitation of Nominations

NOAA issued a proposed rule to re-establish the sanctuary nomination process on June 28, 2013 (78 FR 38848). NOAA plans to finalize the nomination process, based on and including public comments on the nomination process, in the winter of 2013. When the OMB Control Number is issued, NOAA will initiate the public nomination process and solicit nominations.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Submittal of the information requested in these procedures is required for NOAA to consider a site for possible designation as a national marine sanctuary. This information is essential to evaluate the potential benefits of designation, determine whether the proposed site meets the criteria for nomination, evaluate any environmental and socioeconomic impacts, and determine if designation is appropriate.

Nominators are requested to indicate any information that is considered proprietary business or confidential information. Such information is typically exempt from disclosure to anyone requesting information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). NOAA will make all possible attempts to protect such proprietary information, consistent with all applicable FOIA exemptions in 5 U.S.C. 552(b). Typically exempt information includes trade secrets, commercial and financial information (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4)). Personal information affecting an individual's privacy will also be kept confidential consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).

Public reporting burden for this collection of information, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information is estimated to average twenty-nine and one quarter (29.25) hours per response (e.g. initial nomination submission, logging records, and follow-up information), as follows:

- Four (4) hours per response collecting information for nomination;
- Twenty (20) hours per response gathering public support and organizing community meetings;
- Two (2) hours per response of public meetings;
- Two (2) hours per response writing nomination request;
- Fifteen (15) minutes per response to submit nominations (mail/online);
- Thirty (30) minutes per response for amendments to nomination; and
- Thirty (30) minutes per response for follow-up requests.

Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, 1305 East-West Highway (N/NMS-2), Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.