

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 26, 2009
To: Harbor Commissioners
From: John N. Bridley, Waterfront Director
Subject: Harbor Operations Report

Joint Agency Fire Drills

With out-of-town training opportunities and travel budgets slashed, Harbor Patrol is training more with sister agencies in the City, including two joint training sessions with the Fire Department in January.

Employing a scenario that featured a hypothetical high-voltage incident on the dredge (including controlled fire and smoke), the two agencies worked on “size up,” locating and securing the electrical source, medical attention, extricating injured civilians and radio communications. Both drills were successful in obtaining their objectives.

Harbor Patrol will continue to seek similar training opportunities that maximize results for levels of funding available.

February Storms

For the most part, the Waterfront has so far escaped damage from winter storms. A brisk southeaster on February 15th, however, sent one unoccupied boat onto East Beach and required Harbor Patrol to rescue two other individuals from their storm-tossed sailboat. Officers also rescued another man whose dragging vessel got tangled in the Tidemar Barge’s mooring tackle. With a Patrol boat standing by, the victim jumped into the sea wearing a life jacket and was pulled, unharmed, to safety. All boats on City-permitted moorings withstood the storm without incident.

Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) update

At its January meeting in San Diego, the Regional Stakeholders Group (RSG) finalized objectives supporting goals of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and heard presentations on criteria for designing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Near the end of the two-day session, RSG members divided into three work groups (each composed of varied interests) that will remain together throughout the process, which will continue through November.

In early February, the work groups began designing proposed MPAs. Considering participants' mixed interests, nearly all the Southern California study area was covered. Now begins tougher work—more workshops to discuss, refine and compromise on options designed to meet scientific guidelines (size, spacing, habitat representation, etc.) while limiting negative effects to fishermen, harbors and coastal communities.

Staff will continue to report on the MLPA process throughout the year.

National Marine Sanctuary Releases New Management Plan

A revised Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan, the first such revision since the Plan was adopted in 1983, will become effective March 19th. The new Plan provides a framework for the Sanctuary to expand research, education, outreach and enforcement programs, enhance wildlife protections, develop a water quality program and reduce ocean impacts from vessels.

Of particular interest to boaters are clarified regulations prohibiting discharge of raw sewage into Sanctuary waters, which extend six miles around each of the northern Channel Islands, including Santa Barbara Island. Under the revised Plan, discharges from Type 1 or Type 2 Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs), which macerate or chemically treat sewage to limit environmental impacts, will be allowed, but discharges from Type III MSDs (standard holding tanks that discharge untreated sewage) will not. Dumping "grey water" from showers and sinks will continue to be permitted, except for vessels 300 gross registered tons or larger (i.e. cruise ships). Also, fish waste or chum thrown overboard in association with legal fishing operations will continue to be allowed, but discarding food scraps (galley waste) into Sanctuary waters will not.

Enforcement of Sanctuary regulations is coordinated between NOAA, Cal Fish and Game, the Coast Guard and National Park Service. Sanctuary officials emphasize that their goal is to educate boaters, noting they've only had a few violations that went to court over the past 20+ years.

Finally, while the Sanctuary is committed to reviewing its current boundaries to see if they're appropriate for accomplishing its mission, limited resources indicate that no action on this front is anticipated for at least the next two years.

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