



Capitol Hill Ocean Week

2020 | FROM NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY FOUNDATION

NOTE: The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation pre-filmed plenaries and concurrent panels for Capitol Hill Ocean Week. The filming took place two days after the senseless death of George Floyd re-awakened Americans to the racism, injustice and inequity in our country. The climate crisis, pollution, and lack of access to clean water and a clean environment disproportionately impact communities of color. Racial and economic justice all tie into environmental issues. That is why we must fight racism. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation stands with all the people fighting for change, and we join them. Change starts from within, and that is where we will begin. Please read our entire statement [here](#).

Dear CHOW 2020 Participants,

Welcome to Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2020!

Thank you to all of our sponsors for their support. We would like to express our appreciation for our signature sponsor, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This year, NOAA marks its 50th anniversary as a world-class science and management agency. Congratulations NOAA!

We'd also like to thank our presenting sponsors. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, whose support for scientific discovery and environmental conservation is helping to protect healthy and resilient ocean ecosystems. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, whose work focuses on addressing climate change, gaining knowledge through science, and ensuring a better future for the ocean.

And, I want to thank all of you who made individual contributions to support CHOW this year. Your donation helps us expand CHOW's reach and ensure we can continue vital work to protect our marine sanctuaries and monuments.

CHOW 2020 is jam packed with panels, networking events, and opportunities to engage in discussions on ocean and Great Lakes conservation. Though we are virtual, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, CHOW sponsors and our partners are striving to offer the same opportunities for engagement and learning as in previous years. This letter describes what we have in store!

This year, we dive deep into the pressing global issue of protecting biodiversity. The breadth of life in our ocean and Great Lakes is truly astounding. Building a sustainable global economy that protects nature is critical to our health and well-being.

We planned four plenary sessions throughout the day. The plenaries examine some of the biggest issues our ocean and Great Lakes are facing. After opening remarks, we begin with our first panel, "Defining Priorities for Meaningful Protection," at 10:00 AM EDT for a discussion on what successful protection looks like. The plenaries that follow will discuss global action on climate, biodiversity and the ocean, governance of the high seas, and the



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new age of exploration. It is an excellent slate of topics, with panels full of knowledgeable experts and leaders.

There are also eight concurrent break-out sessions to dive deeper into how to protect biodiversity. For these panels, you will have the opportunity to choose which discussion to attend. Do not worry that you will miss the other panels; all of them will be available on this platform in the days following CHOW. These concurrent sessions will explore exciting topics including new approaches for restoration and monitoring, how media and art can inspire individuals to action, how to address climate impacts in conservation planning, and many others. Also, take the opportunity to comment or ask questions of our speakers in the chats, as many of them will be joining us live during the sessions.

Throughout the plenaries and concurrent session, we will be asking you for your opinions on how to protect marine and Great Lakes biodiversity. Please take time to respond to the polls when they appear on screen. You will see in real-time other attendees' responses!

When not engaged in a concurrent session or plenary, make sure to check out the CHOW virtual auction. There is fabulous photography and other art for you to bid on. Proceeds from the auction support CHOW and our work at national marine sanctuaries. If you don't want to bid on the auction items, I hope you will consider a donation to support CHOW. Your individual contribution supports keeping CHOW accessible to all and expanding its reach through this virtual conference. As a special bonus, donors who contribute \$25 or more will automatically be entered to win a fantastic door prize - your choice of one of three vacation or stay-cation experiences.

There are two virtual Expo Halls for you to explore. They showcase the great work of partners and offer opportunities to chat or video conference with them. Inside the CHOW Expo Hall, you will find a Chef's Galley with sustainable seafood cooking tutorials from top chefs. There is an Art Gallery with fantastic ocean and Great Lakes-themed art and photography to inspire you, and a Discover Wonder booth with virtual tours of our national marine sanctuaries and monuments. You can also access these three booths directly off the conference home page by using the navigation bar.

For those with youngsters at home with you, stop by the Kids' Corner where we assembled dozens of at-home and online marine education activities for download. Now children can spend the day learning about their marine environments while the adults do the same. Children DO NOT need to register for the conference. This material is on the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation webpage. Visit the Kids Corner booth or click [here](#) to check it out.

We are happy to announce that the BlueTech Expo is hosting an exhibit hall. The BlueTech Expo features current and emerging "blue technologies" to stimulate innovation and encourage industry-to-government collaboration. Attendees will be able to speak directly to companies to learn about their newest innovations.



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It is my hope that you will take advantage of the unique networking features available on our virtual platform. We wanted to keep the opportunities for connection between attendees which are a hallmark of CHOW. For that reason, your first stop should be to edit your platform profile with your professional information. From the Attendee Directory, you can find and network with colleagues or new contacts through chats or video conferences. You'll be able to participate in chat discussions in the plenary and session rooms, even posing questions to the panelists. There is a Networking Lounge accessible from the main lobby. And, after the closing remarks, please join us in one of several Dive Bars, or virtual happy hour rooms, many themed with exciting and fun interactions!

We are grateful to our generous sponsors, partners, and all our participants. It is with your collaboration and support that Capitol Hill Ocean Week continues to be a success year after year.

Thank you also to all the essential workers who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of your dedication, opportunities for us to continue important conversations like the ones at CHOW are still possible. We owe you a great debt.

Please enjoy Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2020 and remember that *you* are our ocean champions!

And, mark your calendars for June 9 - 11, 2021 for CHOW 2021. Our focus will be on diversity, equity and inclusion in ocean and Great Lakes conservation.

Sincerely,

Kris Sarri
President and CEO
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation