



A California Joint Powers Agency

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STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: January 23, 2026
Agenda Item: 3

To: BEACON Board of Directors
From: Executive Director
Date: January 16, 2026

Subject: Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive a BEACON staff report and a presentation on the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) from Paul Michel, Senior Advisor, NOAA West Coast Region.

DISCUSSION:

On November 30, 2024, the NOAA-designated Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS), became the 17th national marine sanctuary in the US, the third largest, and the sixth along the US West Coast. The CHNMS extends over 4,543 square miles of coastal and offshore waters along 116 miles of California's central coast (Attachment 1: Map of CHNMS).

BEACON has been a long-standing supporter of designation of the CHNMS. The BEACON Board of Directors approved sending a public comment letter of support for designation at its January 20, 2022 Board Meeting (Attachment 2: Beacon Public Comment Letter).

BEACON is sure that the designation and management of the CHNMS will provide enhanced opportunities for marine resource conservation, research, education, cultural and historic restoration, and enhanced coordination of regional sediment management and climate and sea level rise adaptation, all involving Chumash Tribal representatives.

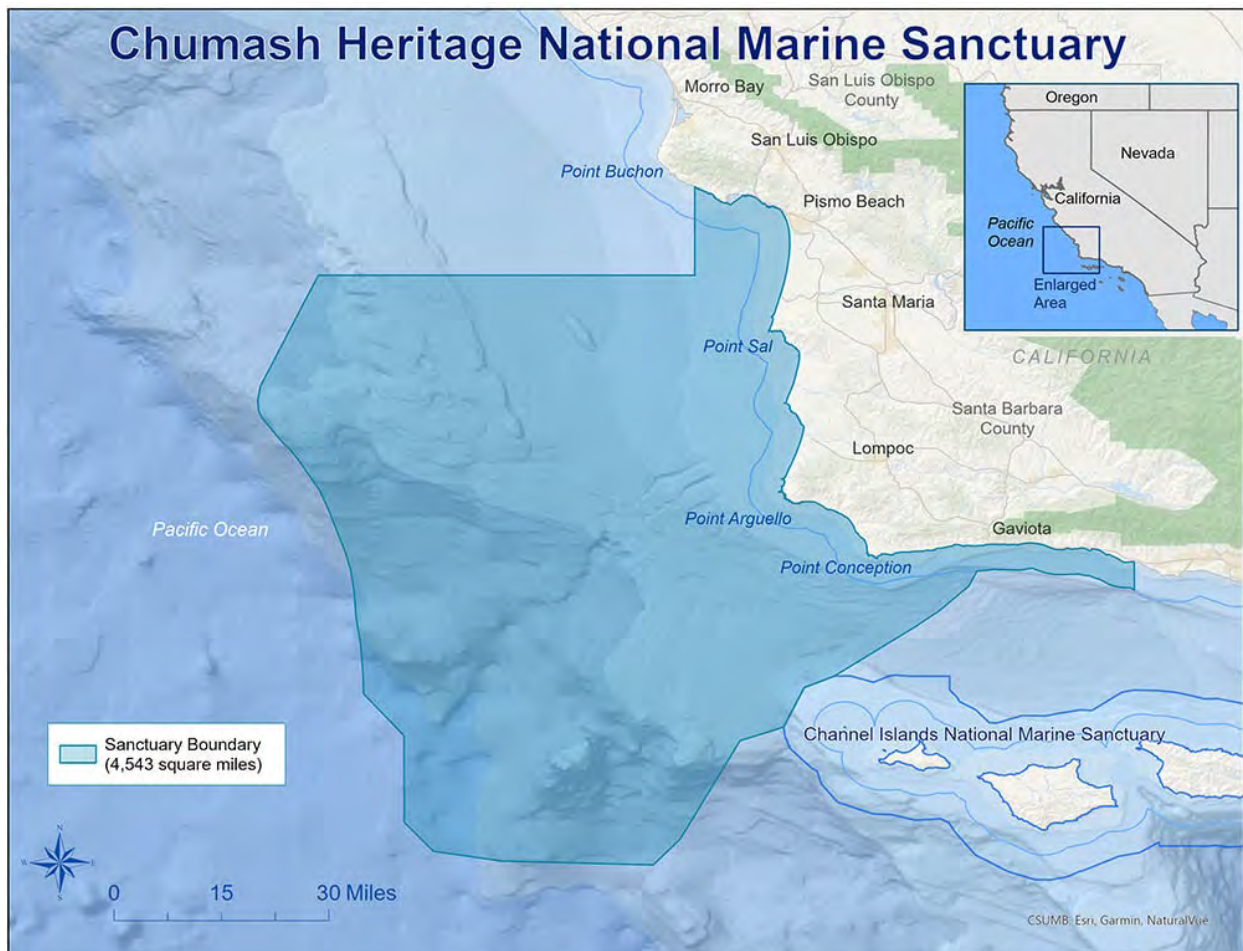
BEACON and the Santa Barbara Littoral Cell (SBLC) share a large coastal and ocean landscape region with the CH NMS. Significant scientific evidence exists of the coastal, marine and ocean connections that exist through the full extent of the Santa Barbara Littoral Cell and the Santa Barbara Channel ecosystem.

BEACON's regional work will be supported with the management plan's focus on coastal resource protection. BEACON believes that the CHNMS Management Plan

will complement BEACON’s regional efforts to preserve and enhance our regional coastal resources, important cultural resources, coastal working landscapes, and the region’s biodiversity.

BEACON is interested in participating in collaboration regarding implementing specific management plan actions that can support multi-benefit coastal enhancement and restoration projects contributing to sustainable and resilient protection of our vital coastal resources. Two important BEACON initiatives stand out, (1) Beacon’s role in developing the Surfers Point Pilot Demonstration Living Shoreline and Managed Retreat Project supported by strong project specific performance analysis and habitat and species monitoring, and (2) its regional level monitoring program Regional Coastal Adaptation Monitoring Program (RCAMP). Most recently, ten years of Project Monitoring at Surfers Point has been analyzed and published, and Beacon has completed an initial RCAMP Monitoring Plan (MP) with Pilot Projects. These initiatives will all benefit from strong coordination with the CHNMS staff and advisors.

Attachment 1.



Map of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary showing sanctuary boundaries, which encompasses 4,543 square miles along 116 miles of coastline. Image: NOAA

ATTACHMENT 2 – BEACON Public Comment Letter, January 24, 2022



A California Joint Powers Agency

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January 24, 2022

Paul E. Michel, Regional Policy Coordinator
NOAA Sanctuaries West Coast Region
99 Pacific Street, Bldg. 100F
Monterey, CA 93940

Docket No. NOAA-NOS-2021-0080

Submitted Electronically

Subject: Proposed Designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Dear Mr. Michel:

The Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON) is submitting this letter in support of the Proposed Designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS). At its Board Meeting on January 21, 2022, the Board unanimously approved sending this letter in support of the proposed designation. The CHNMS would provide enhanced opportunities for marine resource conservation, research, education, cultural and historic restoration, and climate and sea level rise adaptation.

BEACON is a regional Joint Powers Authority of the two coastal counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura and the six coastal cities of Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Ventura, Port Hueneme, and Oxnard, responsible for beach erosion prevention and coastal restoration within the Santa Barbara Littoral Cell (SBLC) from the Santa Maria River in the north to Point Mugu in the south (Exhibit 1). BEACON would share a large coastal and ocean landscape region with the proposed Chumash Heritage NMS.

At the recent January 2022 BEACON Board meeting, several board members supported suggestions that NOAA consider evaluating the eastern (southern) end of the proposed NMS boundary to include the coast and ocean area extending to Point Mugu in Ventura County. The BEACON Board supported this suggested consideration be included in this letter of support. This potential change would include an even larger area of Chumash historical habitation and important cultural centers of life and include the missing section of the Santa Barbara Littoral Cell within the

NMS boundaries, better linking the governance boundaries (Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary) with the important coastal and ocean ecological boundaries (Santa Barbara Littoral Cell and Santa Barbara Channel and Channel Islands).

BEACON is responsible for developing regional sediment management projects to preserve and enhance regional shoreline resources, including importantly the region's beaches. BEACON is tasked with many responsibilities for project and program development essential to sustainable and resilient regional sediment management, coastal protection and enhancement, and regional climate and sea-level adaptation planning and implementation.

BEACON's regional sediment management and climate adaptation efforts are essential to successfully address the regional impacts of climate changes and sea-level rise in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties through developing innovative natural infrastructure and resources conservation, enhancement, and restoration projects consistent with state priorities for coastal climate adaptation.

BEACON's work would be supported with the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. With a focus on resource protection the proposed CHNMS will complement BEACON's regional efforts to preserve and enhance our regional coastal resources, important cultural resources, coastal working landscapes, and the region's biodiversity.

Respectfully,



Gregg Hart, Chair
BEACON Board of Directors

Exhibit 1. The BEACON Coast (attached)

Exhibit 2. Potential Sanctuary Boundary Expansion (attached)

Exhibit 1. The BEACON Coast

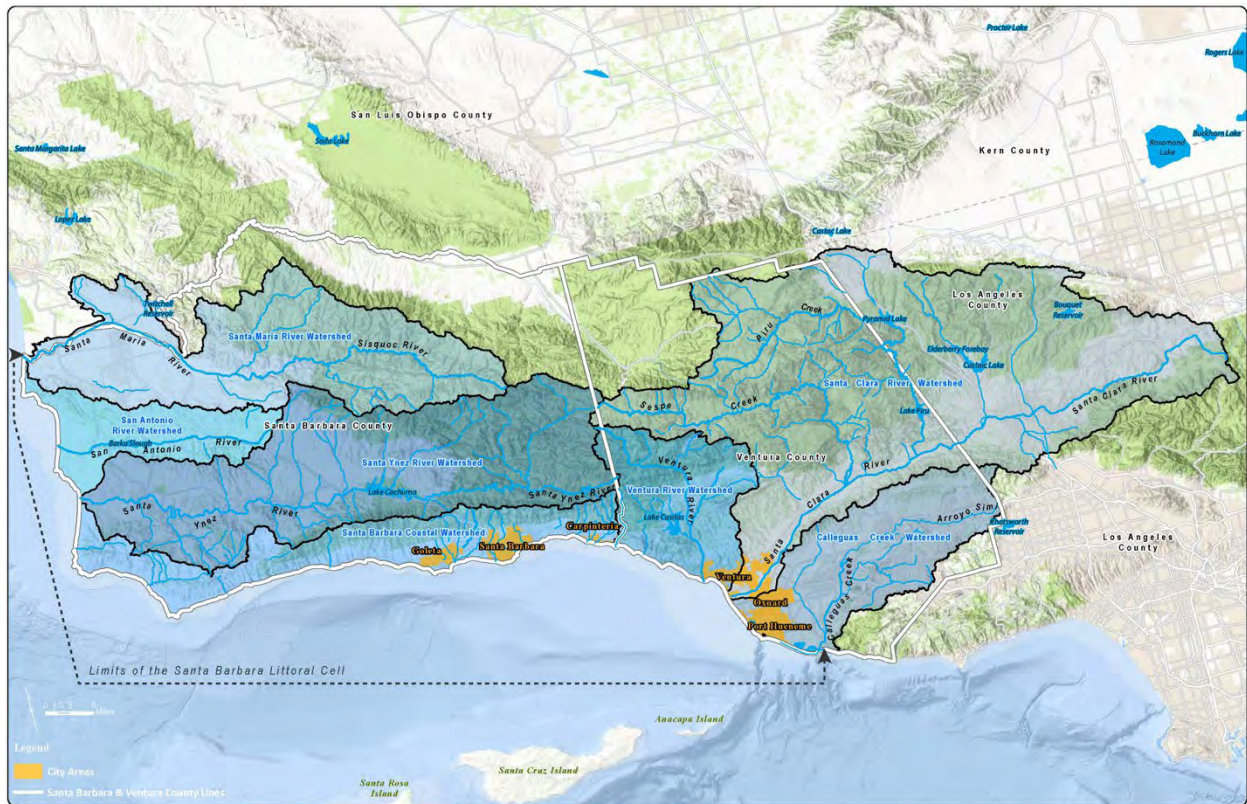


Exhibit 2. Diagonally Marked Area- Potential Boundary Expansion-CHNMS

