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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
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### **NOAA Releases Plans for Managing and Protecting Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary**

NOAA has released the final management plan, regulations and final environmental impact statement for Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

The final plan provides a framework for the sanctuary to expand its research, education, outreach and enforcement programs, create and enhance partnerships, enhance wildlife protections, develop a water quality program, and reduce ocean impacts from vessels.

Priorities listed in the plan include expanding multicultural education, aerial monitoring of sanctuary resources, and collaborative marine research programs, and studying the social and biological effects of marine reserves.

The plan also calls for the completion a new sanctuary office building and education center on the University of California Santa Barbara campus, monitoring and inventorying maritime heritage resource sites, and "greening" sanctuary operations.

"We developed the new management plan with extensive community involvement, and we are proud that it charts a forward-looking course to protect the sanctuary's rich marine ecosystems while allowing compatible, sustainable human uses," said sanctuary superintendent Chris Mobley.

The result of years of study, planning and extensive public input, these detailed documents are major revisions of the sanctuary's original management plan and address key issues including resource protection, wildlife disturbance, vessel discharge, non-native species and water quality.

The final plan consists of non-regulatory actions, but some changes to sanctuary regulations clarify and strengthen protections for marine habitats, sensitive species, water quality and submerged cultural and historical resources. Highlights of the regulatory changes include:

- protecting natural ecosystems from the introduction of non-native species
- protecting the area's water quality by prohibiting harmful vessel discharges
- prohibiting discharges beyond the boundary of the sanctuary that enter and damage the sanctuary's resources
- improving habitat protection by limiting or prohibiting activities that impact the sea floor

The final environmental impact statement analyzes potential environmental and economic impacts of the sanctuary regulation changes.

A goal of the management plan is to expand the sanctuary's leadership role in ocean education through programs such as the award-winning Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) program. The MERITO program earned a 2008 Department of Commerce silver medal, one of the highest forms of recognition awarded by the Secretary of Commerce for implementing a bilingual outreach program that expands

awareness to Latino communities and inspires community involvement in ocean issues.

Copies of the final management plan, regulations, and final environmental impact statement are available at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary office, online at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov>, or by calling 805-884-1464.

Managed by the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1980 to protect marine resources surrounding San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands. The sanctuary spans approximately 1,470 square miles, extending from island shorelines to six miles offshore, and encompasses a rich diversity of marine life, habitats and historical and cultural resources.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the Web:

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov>

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>