

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

Open Council Seats - Spring 2026 Recruitment

Qualifications and Expectations for Open Council Seats

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries regards the involvement of communities and the development of a stewardship ethic as vitally important to the successful conservation of sanctuary resources. Advisory council members help accomplish this goal by serving as liaisons between sanctuary staff and various communities and users connected to the sanctuary environment. We are looking for highly motivated people willing and able to volunteer their time to help us connect and work constructively with the diverse interests, users, and communities that have a stake in the resources of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

The descriptions below outline general expectations and qualifications for the open seats. Members of the council are expected to perform several activities in the fulfillment of their role. These general activities are as follows:

- Serve as a liaison between their represented community and the sanctuary, to include:
 - Inform their represented community about the sanctuary and its mission, and gather input from community members regarding their perspectives on sanctuary programs and initiatives;
 - Maintain and build frequent and routine communication with their constituency to effectively represent their views and perspectives;
 - Identify and forge relationships with potential partners and constituent groups with which the sanctuary should be working;
- Help to identify and resolve issues and conflicts, including emerging issues, of which the sanctuary might not be aware;
- Review and provide input on sanctuary plans, proposals and products, including prioritizing issues;
- Participate in sanctuary events, activities and programs;
- Provide technical and background information on issues facing the sanctuary.

In addition to the general activities conducted by council members, each open seat has specific qualification requirements. Qualification requirements for each open seat are listed below:

Boating Industry:

- Affiliation and familiarity with a boating industry organization or business active in the Florida Keys;
- Knowledge of boating activities within the sanctuary region; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the boating industry as well as recreational boaters.

Citizen at Large: Upper Keys:

- Reside within the represented sanctuary region;
- Familiarity with communities in the sanctuary region;
- Willingness and ability to communicate with members of the general public;
- Experience and/or knowledge regarding public uses and activities in the sanctuary; and
- Freedom to express views and cast votes independent of the expectations held by an employer, constituency or other organization to which the member is affiliated.

Conservation and Environment:

- Affiliation with conservation or environmental organizations active in communities near, or involved in issues affecting, the sanctuary;
- Ability to effectively communicate with multiple organizations and the broader community of conservationists and environmentalists;
- Familiarity with marine conservation issues and management approaches affecting the sanctuary;
- Direct experience working with or representing conservation or environmental organizations, especially those involved with marine conservation; and
- Ability and availability to conduct conservation outreach consistent with the goals of the sanctuary and the mission of the advisory council.

Diving: Upper Keys:

- Affiliation with divers, dive clubs, and/or dive operators active in the Upper Keys area;
- Ability to effectively communicate with divers, dive clubs, dive operators, and the broader Upper Keys community including scientists and researchers; and
- Experience, ability, and availability to conduct outreach within the diving community.

Fishing: Charter Flats:

- Familiarity and affiliation with flats fishing organization or flats fishing charter active in communities within the sanctuary;
- Knowledge of fishing (commercial, recreational, or both) activities within the sanctuary region;
- Breadth of experience and knowledge regarding fisheries law, policies, and practices affecting the sanctuary; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the fishing industries and the public.

Fishing: Charter Sport:

- Familiarity and affiliation with charter fishing organization or sport fishing charter active in communities in or near the sanctuary;
- Knowledge of fishing (commercial, recreational, or both) activities within the sanctuary region;
- Breadth of experience and knowledge regarding fisheries law, policies, and practices affecting the sanctuary; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the fishing industries and the public.

Fishing: Commercial Shell/Scale:

- Familiarity and affiliation with commercial fishing organization or business active in communities near the sanctuary;
- Knowledge of fishing (commercial, recreational, or both) activities within the sanctuary region;
- Breadth of experience and knowledge regarding fisheries law, policies, and practices affecting the sanctuary; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the fishing industries and the public.

Research and Monitoring:

- Affiliation with scientific research institutions or organizations active within sanctuary communities;
- Direct experience with marine research and monitoring programs;
- Ability and availability to conduct outreach within the research community consistent with the goals of the sanctuary and the mission of the advisory council.

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration:

- Affiliation with conservation or research organization active in communities near the sanctuary;
- Ability to effectively communicate with multiple institutions, organizations and/or scientists;
- Direct experience with marine restoration programs;
- Knowledge of and experience with the interconnected nature of South Florida ecosystems

Submerged Cultural Resources:

- Affiliation with submerged cultural resource organizations active in communities near the sanctuary;
- Ability and willingness to communicate with multiple organizations and the broader community in the sanctuary region;
- Familiarity with cultural resource conservation and resource issues and management approaches affecting the sanctuary;

Tourism: Lower Keys:

- Familiarity and affiliation with the tourism industry in the Lower Florida Keys;
- Understanding of the links between tourism, sanctuary resources, and human activities; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the tourism industry and the public.

Tourism: Upper Keys:

- Familiarity and affiliation with the tourism industry in the Upper Florida Keys;
- Understanding of the links between tourism, sanctuary resources, and human activities; and
- Ability and willingness to communicate with representatives from the tourism industry and the public.