



## **CHNMS Sept. 6 Announcement Roundup**

*September 2024*

### **Overview**

The announcement resulted in fourteen unique clips and forty eight articles overall. An article that Paul Rogers wrote for The San Jose Mercury News (highlighted below) got the most reprints. The announcement collectively was covered in outlets with an average 29.58 M UVM (Unique Visitors Per Month, the sum of unique devices visiting an outlet's domain in a month), and a total 1.42 B UVM

### **News Coverage**

#### **EcoWatch | [California's First National Marine Sanctuary in Over 3 Decades Will Protect 116 Miles of Coastline](#)**

September 9, 2024

Cristen Hemingway Jaynes

More than 116 miles of California's stunning coastline is in the process of becoming designated as part of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary — the third largest in the country.

The designation process reached a major milestone last week when the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the marine sanctuary was released.

Under the preferred alternative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Chumash Heritage Sanctuary would cover 4,543 square miles of offshore and coastal waters along more than 100 miles of the central coast of California, a press release from NOAA said.

**"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years,"** said Violet Sage Walker, Northern Chumash Tribal Council chairperson, in the press release. "My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters 40 years ago, and we have been so proud to continue his work. I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today's success, and the future of our People who will always be connected to past, present and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold."

Theo FEIS comes almost a decade after Tribes, Indigenous Peoples, leaders in the community, organizations, state and local officials, businesses and members of Congress began the designation process. The environmental impact statement evaluates the projected environmental, economic and social effects the proposed sanctuary would have, as well as reflects the public input given during multiple stakeholder engagements.

“Efforts to make the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary the first Indigenous-focused sanctuary nomination have spanned many years — and today’s milestone is the product of committed individuals working together across backgrounds, across sectors and across governments to advance co-stewardship while respecting Indigenous Knowledge,” said Brenda Mallory, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. “Under President Biden and Vice President Harris’s leadership, we will achieve a lasting legacy that accounts for a shared and common heritage for all to treasure while also building a clean energy future and combating the climate crisis.”

The proposed sanctuary would become the 17th in the National Marine Sanctuary System, contributing to the Biden-Harris Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative. The initiative supports local conservation efforts to preserve and restore a minimum of 30 percent of the country’s lands and waters by the end of the decade

“Today, our Administration is taking a critical step toward designating the first Indigenous-proposed National Marine Sanctuary,” Vice President Kamala Harris said in the press release. “As a Senator, I was proud to support efforts to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off California’s coast to honor our commitments to Indigenous communities and promote natural spaces.”

The sanctuary would recognize and celebrate the connections of Indigenous Peoples to the region, as well as be managed with active Tribal and Indigenous community involvement that encompasses Indigenous knowledge, values and traditions.

“The sanctuary is anticipated to bring comprehensive community- and ecosystem-based management to nationally significant natural, historical, archeological and cultural resources — including kelp forests, rocky reefs, sandy beaches, underwater mountains and more than 200 shipwrecks,” the press release said.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires NOAA to wait 30 days following publication of the FEIS before it can make its final decision regarding designation.

National marine sanctuaries promote the protection and long-term conservation of the region’s natural and cultural resources that local economies rely on.

“Every tribal nation across the country maintains a significant cultural tie to its aboriginal lands and waters. Sadly, for many, those connections have been difficult to reach. But today, with this announcement, the Chumash people take great strides in restoring our connection to our maritime history,” said Kenneth Kahn, chairperson of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, a planned co-steward of the sanctuary.

As outlined in the FEIS preferred alternative, the national marine sanctuary’s boundaries would not include places that are planned sites for offshore wind turbines or wind energy transmission cables. However, a potential proposed sanctuary expansion would be considered by NOAA in the future, after approval of the transmission cables.

“The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will be a step forward for communities and nature alike,” said Governor of California Gavin Newsom in the press release. “By respecting and supporting tribal leadership and stewardship, we are bringing California one step closer to meeting our aggressive clean energy goals while protecting biodiversity — and above all else,

honoring the land and waters alongside those who have stewarded this area since time immemorial.”

**KEYTV | [Local tribal leaders celebrating major advancement in creation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary](#)**

September 9, 2024

Dave Alley

OCEANO, Calif. - Local Chumash tribal leaders are celebrating the long-proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary is now within just a few weeks from officially being created.

On Friday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its final environmental impact statement for designation of marine sanctuary, which would protect 116 miles of coastline from just south of Diablo Canyon Power Plant in San Luis Obispo County to the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County.

"We're really excited," said Violet Sage Walker, Tribal Chair of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, during an interview at the Oceano Dunes Monday morning. "It's the culmination of over a decade of work."

Under the NOAA's "Final Preferred Alternative", it would cover 4,543 square miles of coastal and ocean waters offshore of Central Coast, stretching out to nearly 60 miles from shore and down to a maximum depth of 11,580 feet.

"It's a special diversity of endangered species, really unique, phytoplankton combinations and, and water temperatures colliding in the Central Coast," said Gabriel Fausto, Chairman of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation. "It's extremely magical here. Our ancestors knew what it was because it's the furthest body of land out into the Pacific Ocean in the Western Hemisphere, so it's as far west as you can go on this continent. To us, it's a sacred place, as we're standing on the back side of Point Conception here, which is traditional and culturally significant to our tribe, Sacred Keepers of the Western gate. The Chumash people protected this place. They lived here and fellowshiped with the land as caretakers of the land. The Western Gate is deeply sacred to us. It's where the spirit leaves this physical dimension and goes off into the next, and so, our ancestors believed that all spirits traveled across the continent to the Western Gate to move on to the next world."

After Friday's release, the NOAA must wait 30 days after publication of the final environmental impact statement before making its decision, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

The agency will release the final regulations and final management plan following the 30 days should NOAA decide to designate the new sanctuary.

**SURFER Magazine | [116 Miles of Pristine California Coast 30 Days Away From Being Protected](#)**

**[Syndicated in [Yahoo](#)]**

September 9, 2024

Jake Howard

About the same time [Caity Simmers](#) and [John John Florence](#) were hoisting world title trophies overhead, or Caity was trying to (those things are so dang heavy), The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) released the final environmental impact statement for the proposed [Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary](#). The current plan would protect 4,543 square miles along 116 miles of California's central coast.

The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would start south of Morro Bay, close to the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, and stretch south through the surf-rich Hollister Ranch zone and Point Conception, reaching all the way to Gaviota. Extending into the Pacific Ocean, as part of the give-and-take nature of the negotiations over the protected space, the boundaries are not expected to include areas where offshore wind turbines are currently planned to be built or where wind energy transmission cables are expected to be laid.

Up next, NOAA must now wait 30 days before making its final decision on the sanctuary. Should things go smoothly over the next month, by this time in October NOAA could be releasing their final regulations and final management plan for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years," said Violet Sage Walker, Chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council. "My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters 40 years ago, and we have been so proud to continue his work. I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today's success, and the future of our People who will always be connected to past, present and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold."

"Every tribal nation across the country maintains a significant cultural tie to its aboriginal lands and waters. Sadly, for many, those connections have been difficult to reach. But today, with this announcement, the Chumash people take great strides in restoring our connection to our maritime history," continued Kenneth Kahn, Chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, which will serve as a Co-steward of the sanctuary.

"NOAA is grateful for the strong interest and leadership of local Tribes and Indigenous communities that engaged in the designation process, helping to inspire the sanctuary's proposed management plan and Indigenous collaborative co-stewardship framework," said NOAA Administrator Richard Spinrad, Ph.D.

In total, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries includes more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters, including 16 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments.

### **Fish Focus | [NOAA REACHES KEY MILESTONE IN DESIGNATION OF CHUMASH HERITAGE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY](#)**

September 9, 2024

**NOAA reaches key milestone in designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.** Agency releases final environmental impact statement for West Coast sanctuary.

The designation process for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary took a major step forward today as NOAA announced the release of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS), which outlines the environmental impacts of the proposed sanctuary and is a

necessary step toward this final designation. Under NOAA's preferred alternative, the sanctuary would include 4,543 square miles of coastal and offshore waters along 116 miles of California's central coast. Upon designation, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would become the third largest national marine sanctuary in the National Marine Sanctuary System.

The FEIS follows nearly a decade of work by Tribes, Indigenous Peoples, community leaders, organizations, businesses, state and local officials, and members of Congress, provides an evaluation of the expected environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed sanctuary, and reflects public input from multiple rounds of stakeholder engagement. If designated, the proposed sanctuary would be the 17th in the National Marine Sanctuary System and contribute to the goals of the Biden-Harris Administration's America the Beautiful initiative, which supports locally-led collaborative conservation efforts with a goal to conserve and restore at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

"Today, our Administration is taking a critical step toward designating the first Indigenous-proposed National Marine Sanctuary," said Vice President Kamala Harris. "As a Senator, I was proud to support efforts to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off California's coast to honour our commitments to Indigenous communities and promote natural spaces. President Biden and I will continue to protect, conserve and restore lands and waters in communities across our nation."

The sanctuary, as described in the preferred alternative, would recognise and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' connections to the region, and be managed with the active involvement of Tribes and Indigenous communities, inclusive of Indigenous values, knowledge and traditions. The sanctuary is anticipated to bring comprehensive community- and ecosystem-based management to nationally significant natural, historical, archaeological, and cultural resources — including kelp forests, rocky reefs, sandy beaches, underwater mountains and more than 200 shipwrecks.

"The Biden-Harris Administration continues to make unprecedented strides on collaborative conservation and management," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. "This milestone in Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary's designation moves us closer to providing critical environmental protections and bolstering recreation, tourism and other local industries along California's central coast, which would grow the economy throughout the region."

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, NOAA must wait 30 days after publication of the final environmental impact statement before making its final decision on designation. Following the 30 days, should NOAA decide to designate the sanctuary, the agency will release the final regulations and final management plan.

"Today marks an important step toward designating the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and is a testament to the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to honouring Tribal Nations and supporting locally-led conservation of the broad range of landscapes and seascapes that make up America the Beautiful," said White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory. "Efforts to make the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary the first Indigenous-focused sanctuary nomination have spanned many years — and today's milestone is the product of committed individuals working together across backgrounds, across sectors and across governments to advance co-stewardship while respecting Indigenous Knowledge. Under President Biden and Vice President Harris's leadership, we will achieve a lasting legacy that accounts for a shared and common heritage for all to treasure while also building a clean energy future and combating the climate crisis."

“President Biden and Vice President Harris have delivered on the most ambitious conservation agenda in decades. This Administration’s conservation vision is locally led, centres environmental justice, and recognises that we can meet both our conservation and clean energy goals at the same time,” said White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi. “Reflecting a collaborative and inclusive process, today’s step toward designation includes a path forward to both protect this rich marine ecosystem and ensure the continued responsible development of offshore wind. Just this week, the Administration announced its tenth massive offshore wind project approval, a total game-change relative to the zero projects approved before President Biden and Vice President Harris took office. With each of those projects — just like with the work to designate the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary — we are working closely with Indigenous communities, ocean users, developers and other stakeholders to protect our ocean’s significant natural and cultural resources while also providing reliable power to homes and businesses through continued development of clean energy.”

National marine sanctuaries are vital to the economic health of coastal communities. Sanctuary designations are designed to promote the long-term conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources in the region and support local and regional economies that rely on those resources.

“Every tribal nation across the country maintains a significant cultural tie to its aboriginal lands and waters. Sadly, for many, those connections have been difficult to reach. But today, with this announcement, the Chumash people take great strides in restoring our connection to our maritime history,” said Kenneth Kahn, Chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, which will serve as a Co-steward of the sanctuary. “The Biden-Harris administration was deliberate at every step of the way, and worked with our tribal government to ensure that this proposal respected our inherent sovereignty and our government-to-government relationship with the United States. This is an exciting step forward for the Chumash people, and a day for all of us on the California Central Coast to celebrate.”

“The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will be a step forward for communities and nature alike — proof that we can make real progress when we work together,” said California Governor Gavin Newsom. “By respecting and supporting tribal leadership and stewardship, we are bringing California one step closer to meeting our aggressive clean energy goals while protecting biodiversity — and above all else, honouring the land and waters alongside those who have stewarded this area since time immemorial.”

“NOAA is grateful for the strong interest and leadership of local Tribes and Indigenous communities that engaged in the designation process, helping to inspire the sanctuary’s proposed management plan and Indigenous collaborative co-stewardship framework,” said NOAA Administrator Richard Spinrad, Ph.D.

“This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years,” said Violet Sage Walker, Chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council. “My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters 40 years ago, and we have been so proud to continue his work. I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today’s success, and the future of our People who will always be connected to past, present and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold.”



The boundaries for the national marine sanctuary, as outlined in the preferred alternative in the FEIS, would not include areas where offshore wind turbines are currently planned to be built or where wind energy transmission cables are expected to be laid. NOAA would consider a potential expansion of the proposed sanctuary in the coming years, however, after transmission cables have been approved.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a network of underwater parks encompassing more than 620,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters. The network includes a system of 16 national marine sanctuaries and Papahānaumokuākea and Rose Atoll marine national monuments. The system works with diverse partners and stakeholders to promote responsible, sustainable ocean uses that ensure the health of our most valued ocean places.

**Seafood Source | [NOAA inches closer toward establishing marine sanctuary along California coast](#)**

September 9 2024

Nathan Strout

NOAA has completed another milestone toward achieving U.S. President Joe Biden's goal of establishing a new national marine sanctuary off the coast of central California, releasing the final Environmental Impact Statement for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

"Today, our administration is taking a critical step toward designating the first Indigenous-proposed National Marine Sanctuary," Vice President Kamala Harris said in a statement. "As a senator, I was proud to support efforts to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off California's coast to honor our commitments to Indigenous communities and promote natural spaces. President Biden and I will continue to protect, conserve, and restore lands and waters in communities across our nation."

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) has been leading the campaign to establish the 4,543 square miles of coastal and offshore waters spanning 116 miles of coastline as the 16th national sanctuary in the U.S. since the 1980s. Biden officially proposed designating Chumash as the first Tribally nominated national marine sanctuary in 2023.

"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years," Northern Chumash Tribal Council Chairwoman Violet Sage Walker said in a statement. "My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters many years ago and we have been so proud to continue his work. I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today's success, and the future of our People who will always be connected to past, present, and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold."

Located between protected areas, the government claims the sanctuary would establish "ecological connectivity and protected corridors for fish and wildlife."

"The Biden-Harris administration continues to make unprecedented strides on collaborative conservation and management," U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said. "This milestone in Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary's designation moves us closer to providing critical environmental protections and bolstering recreation, tourism, and other local industries along California's central coast, which would grow the economy throughout the region."

The government expects to issue a final sanctuary designation by the end of the year.

**World Journal | [Central California to establish new national marine sanctuary](#)**

September 8, 2024

Lin Simu

The process of creating the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary has taken another big step and is expected to be completed before President Biden leaves office. The area off the coast of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties in central California will permanently ban oil drilling.

The San Jose Messenger reported that the long-standing wishes of indigenous peoples and environmentalists in this area will soon be realized, with the Biden administration issuing a final environmental impact statement on the 6th. This is the first new national marine reserve on the California coast in 32 years. It has the same level as a national park. It is a water version of the national park and is four times the size of Yosemite National Park.

It is a 116-mile stretch of coastline that extends 60 miles outward, forming a protected area of 4,543 square miles. It includes already popular tourist attractions, such as Pismo Beach and Gaviota Coast. Among the many creatures that live in this area are humpback whales (humpback whales), sea otters (sea otters), leatherback sea turtles (leatherback sea turtles), kelp forests (kelp forests), etc.

The Biden administration hopes to issue a final decree in October and is expected to announce its establishment before he leaves office in January next year. Trump, who hates environmental protection, tried to allow new oil drilling off the coast of California, Oregon and Washington state during his term, but ultimately failed. Former California Governor Jerry Brown seemed prescient when he signed a bill in 2018 banning oil pipelines, oil storage stations, and oil drilling equipment within three miles of the coastline.

The sanctuary also marks another milestone in American history: It is the first national marine sanctuary proposed by a Native American tribe. The Northern Chimash tribe, which currently lives in Los Osos near Morro Bay, proposed the idea in 2015. Before Europeans arrived on what is now the west coast of the United States, the Chiu Marsh and Salinan tribes had been living in central California for at least thousands of years.

Violet Sage Walker, chairwoman of the Chiu Marsh Tribal Council, pointed out on the 6th that the Biden administration's announcement that day was a major achievement for indigenous peoples and supporters.

**Sierra Sun Times | [NOAA Reaches Key Milestone in Designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary – Protects 116 Miles Along the Coast of Central California](#)**

September 7, 2024

**Agency releases final environmental impact statement for West Coast sanctuary**

September 7, 2024 - The designation process for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary took a major step forward on Friday as NOAA announced the release of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS), which outlines the environmental impacts of the proposed sanctuary and is a necessary step toward this final designation. Under NOAA's preferred alternative, the sanctuary would include 4,543 square miles of coastal and offshore waters along 116 miles of California's central coast. Upon designation, the Chumash Heritage



National Marine Sanctuary would become the third largest national marine sanctuary in the National Marine Sanctuary System.

The FEIS follows nearly a decade of work by Tribes, Indigenous Peoples, community leaders, organizations, businesses, state and local officials, and members of Congress, provides an evaluation of the expected environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed sanctuary, and reflects public input from multiple rounds of stakeholder engagement. If designated, the proposed sanctuary would be the 17th in the National Marine Sanctuary System and contribute to the goals of the Biden-Harris Administration's America the Beautiful initiative, which supports locally-led collaborative conservation efforts with a goal to conserve and restore at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

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**San Luis Obispo Tribune | [NOAA reveals official vision for Chumash marine sanctuary on Central Coast. 'A huge moment'](#)**

**[Syndicated in [AOL](#) and [Yahoo](#) as well]**

September 7, 2024

Stephanie Zappelli & Mackenzie Shuman

The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) unveiled its official plan for the [Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary](#) on Friday.

If designated, the sanctuary would protect 4,543 square miles of the Pacific Ocean from the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County to just below the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County, according to the final environmental impact report released Friday morning.

The purpose of the sanctuary is to protect marine ecosystems, shipwrecks and underwater Chumash cultural and historic sites off the Central Coast. Offshore oil drilling and certain sea floor disturbances would be prohibited in the sanctuary.

"This historic designation will come not a moment too soon," Rep. Salud Carbajal said in a news release. "Our oceans and our communities are facing unprecedented challenges from a changing marine environment. This new sanctuary comes at a critical time for our region.

He continued: "I look forward to working with our tribal and local stakeholders and federal partners to finalize these boundaries — which will nearly double the coastline protected along the Central Coast — and build on them to protect every coastal community and ecosystem in our region."

This is the first national marine sanctuary nominated by a Native American tribe and the first that would include collaborative management with tribes.

While NOAA would be the lead agency managing the sanctuary, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and other Native American tribes would be included as co-stewards on numerous boards governing the sanctuary.

"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years," [Northern Chumash Tribal Council chairwoman Violet Sage Walker said in a news release](#). "My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters many years ago, and we have been so proud to continue his work. I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today's success, and the future of our People who will always

be connected to past, present and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold.”

NOAA considered 110,000 public comments on the [draft environmental impact report](#) while revising the sanctuary boundaries and management plan.

The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will protect 4,543 square miles of the Pacific Ocean from just south of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County to Naples Reef on the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County. Courtesy of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration

Marine sanctuary leaves room for offshore wind development

The final proposed boundaries for the sanctuary would protect 4,543 square miles of the Pacific Ocean.

If designated, the sanctuary will stretch across 116 miles of shoreline from just south of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County to Naples Reef on the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County.

It spans westward 60 miles to catch geologic features like Rodriguez Seamount, Arguello Canyon and Santa Lucia Bank. The sanctuary reaches a maximum depth of 11,580 feet below sea level.

The proposed boundaries are slightly smaller than what was initially being considered.

In 2015, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council proposed a sanctuary design that started at the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and extended north to meet the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary would have also stretched 80 miles offshore to include the seabed west of Santa Lucia Bank.

This design would have protected about 7,600-square-miles of the Pacific Ocean and created a contiguous strip of national marine sanctuaries on the California coast.

NOAA, however, shortened the northern boundary to allow for the development of underwater cables that would carry electricity generated by offshore wind turbines in the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area to shore.

The administration decided that the final sanctuary boundaries struck “an acceptable balance between resource use and conservation of sanctuary resources,” the report said.

At the request of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, offshore wind companies in the Morro Bay Call Area and numerous elected representatives, the final sanctuary management plan will also include a pathway for expanding the sanctuary boundary to meet the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary at Cambria.

That plan would require NOAA to start exploring lengthening the sanctuary boundaries by January 2032 if it wished to pursue a larger sanctuary.

Meanwhile, NOAA extended the southern boundary to the Gaviota Coast to protect beaches, kelp forests and reefs there, as well as area that was previously “home to numerous, large Chumash villages at the time of European first contact,” the report said.

Fish-eating sea anemone live on the rocky reef off Point Estero, where NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and partners are listening to underwater sound inside the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Robert Schwemmer NOAA

Sanctuary would prohibit oil drilling, hunting

The management plan will prohibit certain activities to protect resources in the sanctuary, the report said.

New oil, gas and mineral exploration, development and production would be prohibited in the sanctuary. Current leaseholders would be allowed to continue their operations, the report said. Discharges, such as sewage, would not be allowed in the sanctuary.

It would also prohibit the harming or taking of a marine mammal, sea turtle or bird from within its boundaries. Releasing non-native species would also be prohibited.

The sanctuary would not allow disturbances to the seabed or historical resources.

NOAA will establish a permit process for otherwise prohibited activities that “will promote or enhance local Native American cultural or ceremonial activities,” research, education and management, the report said.

The management plan will also include regulations for the “beneficial use” of dredged materials from Morro Bay and Port San Luis. Those materials must be used for “habitat protection or restoration purposes,” the report said.

The sanctuary management plan will not regulate vessel speeds or establish new fishing regulations, the report said.

Comments on the draft designation documents urged NOAA to establish a “special treatment area” between Morro Bay and Cambria with regulations that restrict vessel speeds but allow subsea cables.

That is not likely to happen, however.

“Applying a different set of regulations to one spatial area was rejected because NOAA intends to impose the same regulations across the entire sanctuary area to facilitate public understanding of sanctuary regulations and to assist enforcement,” the report said.

Meanwhile, the sanctuary will protect Chumash sacred sites, such as Point Conception, which is considered the place where the soul departs to the afterlife. The sanctuary also protects submerged Chumash villages and other cultural sites.

“Protecting these submerged ancient villages from future industrial encroachment will ensure the resting places of their ancestors remain undisturbed,” Mission Blue founder Dr. Sylvia Earle said in a news release. “The cultural significance of Chumash heritage makes this National Marine Sanctuary the only one of its kind.”

How would marine sanctuary impact the environment?

The marine sanctuary would be largely beneficial to marine habitats that support a diversity of ecosystems in the study area, the report said.

Sanctuary vessels, deploying buoys or monitoring equipment and uncrewed underwater systems could have temporary, negligible adverse impacts on the environment — but otherwise, the protections afforded by the sanctuary will have long-term positive impacts on the environment, the report said.

According to a news release from the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the sanctuary would “support climate solutions by promoting the health of kelp forests and other ocean habitats that serve a host of vital ecosystem functions, including carbon storage.”

“It will protect a globally significant ecological transition zone that is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including many at-risk species such as snowy plovers, southern sea otters, leatherback sea turtles, black abalone and blue whales,” the release said. “The sanctuary will also provide opportunities to advance cultural and environmental education and outreach.”

Painted greenling, convict fish, bat star and sea urchins inhabit a rocky reef off Point Estero near the sound monitoring station in the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Robert Schwemmer NOAA

What happens next?

NOAA must now decide whether or not to designate the sanctuary within 30 days after releasing the draft environmental impact report.

After the 30 days, if NOAA decides to designate the sanctuary, it will release the final boundaries, regulations and management plan, according to its website.

After that, the documents would then need to go to Gov. Gavin Newsom and Congress for final review.

“The release of the final EIR puts us one step away from the final designation,” State Senator John Laird said in a news release Friday. “I am grateful for the leadership and years of advocacy by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the Sierra Club and tens of thousands of local residents.

“I am proud to have been part of this effort to sustain the beauty and vitality of the Pacific Ocean along the Central Coast — and look forward to the sanctuary designation and implementation.”

**POLITICO California** | [Top of the Day: All eyes are on California's northern neighbor](#)

September 6, 2024

Jordan Wolman

**MARINE SANCTUARY MOVES AHEAD:** The Biden administration moved toward finalizing the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary today by releasing a final environmental review, with a new boundary proposal for offshore wind access, [reports Heather Richards](#) for POLITICO's E&E News.

If designated later this year, the central California marine sanctuary would be the third largest in the nation and the country's first Indigenous-proposed one

The outlined boundary doesn't include a significant portion of what was initially proposed for the monument by the Northern Chumash. The tribes originally opposed a carve out to allow transmission lines from offshore wind projects under development to reach grid infrastructure at Morro Bay and the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant.

But a compromise offered by the Northern Chumash and the developers, co-signed by Democratic California Rep. **Salud Carbajal**, Sen. **Alex Padilla** and several others, would designate the sanctuary in phases. Under that suggestion, NOAA would initially leave a transmission corridor, but after wind transmission plans had advanced, it would include those waters in the sanctuary.



NOAA did not commit fully to this proposal today but said it will “consider a potential expansion of the proposed sanctuary in the coming years ... after transmission cables have been approved.”

**Violet Sage Walker**, chair of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, said the final environmental review is “a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years.”

The review is the penultimate step before designation of the sanctuary. NOAA must wait 30 days after its release before issuing a decision, and is expected to approve the sanctuary. — **BB, HR**

**The San Jose Mercury News** | [Milestone reached in fight for Chumash Marine Sanctuary](#)  
[See coverage report for full list of more than 27 reprints]  
September 6, 2024  
Paul Rogers

A long-running effort by native tribes and environmentalists to establish the first new national marine sanctuary along California’s coastline in 32 years — the aquatic version of a new national park — where offshore oil drilling would be prohibited forever, reached a key milestone on Friday.

The Biden administration published the [final environmental impact statement](#) for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, selecting boundaries that will stretch along 116 miles of coast in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

The area, which includes popular spots like Pismo Beach and the Gaviota Coast, is home to humpback whales, sea otters, leatherback sea turtles, kelp forests, rocky reefs and more than 200 shipwrecks. Under the proposal, it would cover 4,543 square miles — an area nearly four times the size of Yosemite National Park — and extend out to 60 miles offshore.

The Biden administration said Friday that it plans to publish final rules in October, with the designation officially finished by the time President Biden leaves office in January. Former President Donald Trump, during his time in office, attempted to allow new offshore oil drilling along California, Oregon and Washington. The plans never came to fruition, however, due to local and state opposition, including a law former Gov. Jerry Brown signed in 2018 banning the construction of new pipelines, terminals, and other oil drilling equipment in state waters out to 3 miles off the coast.

The Chumash sanctuary will be the first national marine sanctuary in the nation proposed by a Native American tribe. The Northern Chumash Tribe, based in Los Osos, near Morro Bay, began advocating for the idea in 2015.

“This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years,” said Violet Sage Walker, chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, on Friday.

Walker, whose late father, tribal Chief Fred Collins, led the campaign until his death in 2021, noted that tribal members “will always be connected to past, present, and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold.”

A map of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Source: NOAA)  
Chumash and Salinan tribes have lived along the Central California coast for thousands of years.

Under the proposed rules, tribes will be involved with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in managing the new sanctuary. As with most sanctuaries, offshore oil and gas drilling, along with undersea mining, will be prohibited. National marine sanctuaries do not limit commercial or recreational fishing.

Nevertheless, many commercial fishermen in the area have opposed a new sanctuary.

“We’re worried about new regulations. What are we in for here?” said Tom Hafer, president of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen’s Organization. “There are already so many rules we have to abide by. This is another thing we have to worry about.”

Hafer fishes for black cod and spot prawns from his 43-foot boat, the “Kathryn H.” He said there are about 35 other commercial fishermen in the Morro Bay area who catch salmon, rockfish, abalone Dungeness crab, all of whom fall under strict state and federal rules.

“We are a little wary, a little scared,” he said Friday.

America has 15 national marine sanctuaries. They can be established by Congress or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under a law signed in 1972 by former President Richard Nixon.

California has four: Monterey Bay, which stretches from the Golden Gate Bridge to Hearst Castle, Channel Islands off Southern California, Gulf of the Farallones off San Francisco, and Cordell Bank off the Marin County coast.

The last national marine sanctuary to be established in California was Monterey Bay, by the administration of George H.W. Bush in 1992, which ended years of political battles after the Reagan administration proposed to allow offshore oil drilling off Big Sur, the San Mateo coast and other parts of Northern California.

One of the main controversies in the planning for the Chumash sanctuary, which involved years of public hearings and more than 100,000 public comments, involved plans for offshore wind farms.

Originally, supporters of the Chumash sanctuary proposed that its boundaries run right up to the southern boundary of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, near Hearst Castle.

But President Biden and Gov. Gavin Newsom have supported the construction of floating offshore wind farms off Morro Bay and Humboldt County to provide clean energy. In selecting Friday’s proposed alternative, NOAA left a gap around Morro Bay out of the new sanctuary to allow undersea cables and other equipment associated with connecting future offshore wind turbines to the state’s electrical grid.

Tribal leaders and environmental groups have suggested that once those projects are built, the sanctuary boundaries could be enlarged.

On Friday, one of California's top environmental officials said he supports that idea. "There is an interest in a second phase that could expand the sanctuary northward once cables are laid," said Wade Crowfoot, California's secretary of natural resources. "We need to cross that bridge when we come to it, but I support a focused discussion on how we can expand the boundaries."

Crowfoot said the Newsom administration is very pleased that the sanctuary is at the finish line. "It's a huge deal," he said. "That part of the coast is really important environmentally. It's where the Southern Current meets the Northern Current. There is a remarkable ecological richness. Biologically it's a really sensitive and important place, and culturally, it's also very, very important. This coast that will now be protected is fundamental to the Chumash people."

### **The Hill | [Biden administration takes step toward Indigenous-proposed marine sanctuary off California coast](#)**

[Syndicated in [Yahoo](#) and [Aol](#)]

September 6, 2024

Rachel Frazin

The Biden administration has taken the penultimate step in designating a new marine sanctuary off California's coast.

The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would recognize the Indigenous Chumash people's connection to the region.

Originally proposed by Fred Collins, the leader of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, the site would be the first Indigenous-proposed national marine sanctuary.

The area in question is off the coast of central California, and the sanctuary would encompass 4,543 square miles of ocean waters.

The Biden administration described it as having "nationally significant biodiversity." It has extensive kelp forests and is habitat for animals including humpback and blue whales, the southern sea otter and leatherback sea turtles.

The step taken by the administration on Friday is the release of a final environmental review, and the decision to name the new marine sanctuary could come after at least 30 days.

"Our community is a vibrant, bright community and it's as passionate today about protecting our coastline and taking care of our animals and plants as it's ever been," said Violet Sage Walker, chair of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and Collins's daughter.

"As a Senator, I was proud to support efforts to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off California's coast to honor our commitments to Indigenous communities and promote natural spaces," Vice President Harris said in a written statement. "President Biden and I will continue to protect, conserve and restore lands and waters in communities across our nation."

There are currently 16 national marine sanctuaries in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's system.

## **KEYT News | [NOAA reaches key milestone in designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary](#)**

September 6, 2024

Bryan Hernandez

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released its final environmental impact statement for designation of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

The key milestone marks one of the last hurdles cleared in the decades-long campaign led by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council in their goal to "protect the Central California coastline, submerged cultural sites, ocean habitat, and abundant wildlife held sacred to the Chumash Peoples for millennia."

Now the NOAA must wait 30 days after publication of the final environmental impact statement before making its decision, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

The agency will release the final regulations and final management plan, following the 30 days should NOAA decide to designate the sanctuary.

NOAA says, the sanctuary would allow for the protection of nationally significant natural, ecological, historical, and cultural resources along 116 miles of coastline from just south of Diablo Canyon Power Plant in San Luis Obispo County to the Gaviota Coast in Santa Barbara County.

Under the NOAA's "Final Preferred Alternative," it would cover 4,543 square miles of coastal and ocean waters offshore of Central Coast, stretching out to nearly 60 miles from shore and down to a maximum depth of 11,580 feet.

The Northern Chumash Tribal Council celebrated the milestone in what they say "is the first Tribally nominated national marine sanctuary in the history of the United States and the first new sanctuary in California in over 25 years."

"This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years. My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters many years ago and we have been so proud to continue his work," **said Northern Chumash Tribal Council Chairwoman Violet Sage Walker.** "I am delighted to celebrate his vision, today's success, and the future of our People who will always be connected to past, present, and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold."

Today, U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24) and U.S. Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26), among others, welcomed NOAA's announcement.

"The Central Coast has pursued this sanctuary designation for decades, and as someone who's been helping push for it in Washington since I first got to Congress I am so pleased to see us passing the final checkpoint on our way to seeing the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary made official before the end of this year," said Rep. Carbajal.

"Not only will designation of the sanctuary help honor our region's rich Native American heritage, but it will also protect vulnerable marine wildlife and our coastal areas, which are hubs for economic activity including our fisheries industry and recreation and tourism industry," said

Rep. Brownley. "I look forward to continuing to work with tribal leaders, regional and national stakeholders, and the U.S. Department of Commerce as we move forward with the designation."

**E&E News | [Biden admin hits 'historic' milestone for marine sanctuary](#)**

September 6, 2024

Heather Richards

The Biden administration has advanced a massive marine sanctuary off the central California coast, long been sought by Native American tribes, with a promise to potentially expand its boundaries after offshore wind projects have moved forward.

The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, if designated later this year, would be the third largest in the nation and would add a huge swath of ocean to President Joe Biden's goal to conserve 30 percent of U.S. waters by the end of the decade.

NOAA Sanctuaries released a final environmental review Friday, with a new boundary proposal for offshore wind access.

"Today, our Administration is taking a critical step toward designating the first Indigenous-proposed National Marine Sanctuary," said Vice President Kamala Harris, a former California senator, in a statement. "As a Senator, I was proud to support efforts to create the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary off California's coast to honor our commitments to Indigenous communities and promote natural spaces. President Biden and I will continue to protect, conserve and restore lands and waters in communities across our nation."

The proposal, however, leaves out a significant portion of what was initially proposed — connecting to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to the north and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to the south.

NOAA has instead cut out a path where offshore wind projects planned in federal waters can lay transmission cables to connect to two key locations on the grid: a shuttered power plant at Morro Bay and Diablo Canyon, the site of a nuclear power plant scheduled for retirement.

Since the Chumash sanctuary was proposed in 2015, California's offshore wind industry has made significant strides, drumming up a potential conflict between Biden's commitment to Native American cultural conservation and a nascent renewable sector key to his decarbonization goals.

Three of the first offshore wind leases in the Pacific were sold by the Biden administration in 2022 adjacent to the proposed sanctuary.

NOAA released a draft environmental review last year that included a carve out for transmission to reach the grid infrastructure at Morro Bay. But developers said they also needed the Diablo interconnection, or their projects would be nonviable. At the same time, the Northern Chumash were opposed to NOAA's proposal to cut out a large swath of their proposed sanctuary.

A compromise offered by the Northern Chumash and the developers, co-signed by Democratic California Reps. Salud Carbajal, Alex Padilla and several others, would designate the sanctuary

in phases. Under that suggestion, NOAA would initially leave a transmission corridor, but after wind transmission plans had advanced, it would include those waters in the sanctuary.

NOAA did not commit fully to this proposal Friday but said it will “consider a potential expansion of the proposed sanctuary in the coming years ... after transmission cables have been approved.”

NOAA previously indicated it could permit the transmission cables inside the sanctuary. But developers raised concerns that the NOAA permitting process lacked clarity and certainty.

White House national climate adviser Ali Zaidi said Friday that the Chumash designation process shows that renewable energy can coexist with conservation.

“This Administration’s conservation vision is locally led, centers environmental justice, and recognizes that we can meet both our conservation and clean energy goals at the same time,” he said.

NOAA did not respond to request for details on how it will consider expansion of the sanctuary’s boundaries in the future. The final environmental review is the penultimate step before designation of the sanctuary. NOAA must wait 30 days after its release before issuing a decision.

NOAA is expected to approve the sanctuary and will release a management plan and regulations for the sanctuary at that time.

In addition to the cultural and historic significance of the proposed sanctuary, it includes kelp forests, underwater mountains and more than 200 shipwrecks, according to NOAA.

Joel R. Johnson, president and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, said the sanctuary would be a “transformational moment for our coastal California waters and all stewards of our shared ocean.”

“The first Indigenous-nominated sanctuary is an historic achievement for our country,” Johnson said.

Gabe Frausto, chair of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation wrote, “for us, this means the opportunity to collaboratively-manage and protect our sacred lands and waters, to support our efforts for cultural revitalization, and continue in restoring our traditional practices and reinforcing our tribal sustainability and sovereignty.”

The sanctuary’s management will include oversight from tribes, including the Northern Chumash Tribe, a tribe recognized in the state of California that originally nominated the sanctuary and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, a federally recognized tribe.

“Every tribal nation across the country maintains a significant cultural tie to its aboriginal lands and waters. Sadly, for many, those connections have been difficult to reach. But today, with this announcement, the Chumash people take great strides in restoring our connection to our maritime history,” said Kenneth Kahn, chair of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

Khan said the Biden administration had respected its obligation to confer with tribal governments on the sanctuary.



House Natural Resources Committee ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) also credited the Biden administration for advancing a co-management strategy with tribes for the Chumash sanctuary.

"Today's announcement is a significant victory for the Chumash people and for all those who care about preserving our natural and cultural heritage," Grijalva said in a statement. "The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will safeguard one of the most biologically diverse and culturally significant marine areas in the country, and it will do so with the guidance and leadership of the Chumash people."

Violet Sage Walker, chair of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, said the final environmental review is "a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years."

She said: "My father, the late Chief Fred Collins, began the journey to protect these sacred waters 40 years ago, and we have been so proud to continue his work."