



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA

January 25, 2022

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

RE: Proposed Designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

National Marine Sanctuaries are a powerful conservation tool that have been used for half a century to conserve important marine ecosystems and cultural sites from mining and industrial development while maintaining public access to fishing, diving, and exploring within their boundaries. The California Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) applauds the proposed designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and we emphasize the great work put forth by the Northern Chumash Tribal Council among others to highlight the unique ecological and cultural resources of this region. We especially appreciate the nomination request, which states that *“the proposed sanctuary shall have no impact on treaty fishing rights and impose no future regulations upon commercial or recreational fishing.”*

BHA is a non-profit organization dedicated to our wild public lands, waters and wildlife. With over 350,000 supporters distributed across North America, we seek to ensure North America’s outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and work on behalf of fish, wildlife and wild places. BHA recognizes the need for enduring conservation measures that balance healthy and thriving ecosystems with access and opportunity for all individuals regardless of race, political preference, economic status or privilege.

In addition to maintaining the existing diving, fishing, foraging, hunting, and recreational activities in the region, we request that the proposed National Marine Sanctuary commit resources to support citizen science initiatives and other restoration activities, which will promote healthy ecosystems and ensure the region’s adaptability to real-time threats, such as those wrought by invasive species. We encourage programs that solicit data and engagement from the angling, spearfishing, diving, and hunting communities to promote sound management practices for fish and wildlife based on the best available science and the North American Model of Wildlife Management. We hope that this proposed designation can serve as a model for future conservation measures along the coast and can contribute to the State’s 30x30 campaign as well as the Biden Administration’s America the Beautiful initiative.

Sincerely,

Eric Hanson,
Co-Chair & Policy Lead, California Chapter
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

