

**NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS
CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL**

April 16, 9:00am – 4:00pm

*NOAA Inouye Regional Center – Ko‘olau Haka Conference Room
1845 Wasp Blvd., Building 176
Honolulu, Hawai‘i*

Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2014

ATTENDEES

Voting Members: Tim Johns (State of Hawai‘i, Chair); Linda Paul (Conservation, Vice-Chair); Rick Lee (Ocean-Related Tourism); Laura Thompson (Conservation); Rick Gaffney (Recreational Fishing); Don Schug (Research); Tammy Harp (Native Hawaiian); Louis “Buzzy” Agard (Native Hawaiian); Cindy Hunter (Research); Jessica Wooley (Conservation); Brian Bowen (Research Alternate for Gilmartin); Judith Cucco (Conservation Alternate for Wooley).

Non-Voting Members: Dennis Rowley (Department of Defense); Dan Polhemus (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); Eric Roberts (U.S. Coast Guard); Brandon JimOn (NOAA / Office of Law Enforcement); Paul Wong (Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary); Joshua DeMello Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council); Samantha Brooke (NOAA / National Marine Fisheries Service) and David Swatland (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (NWHI CRER)). It is noted that Ann Bell from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges Office was present during the morning.

Absent: Kem Lowry (Citizen-At-Large, Secretary); Bill Gilmartin (Research); Bobby Gomes (Commercial Fishing); Pelika Bertelmann (Native Hawaiian); David Laist (Marine Mammal Commission); Gail Grabowsky (Education); and Michael Lesser (National Science Foundation). It is noted that Mr. Laist was unable to attend the meeting due to NOAA/Inouye Regional Center technical issues.

[All Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) Staff]: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS): Hoku Johnson, Kanani Medeiros, Pua Borges-Smith, Justin Rivera, Kālewa Correa, Tia Brown, and Alyssa Miller.

[Other Staff]: Cynthia Vanderlip (Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) / Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW)); Charles Littnan (NMFS), Jeff Walters (NMFS), and Rachel Sprague (NMFS)

[Members of the Public]: Barb Mayer.

PURPOSES OF THE MEETING:

- 1) Receive updates on ONMS initiatives and related efforts
- 2) Receive updates related to the 2014 field season

I. CALL TO ORDER (Johns)

Council Chair Tim Johns called the meeting to order. Introductions followed.

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Johns)

Mr. Johns reviewed the day’s agenda. Minutes from November 13, 2013 were reviewed; Linda Paul made a motion to approve the minutes and Buzzy Agard seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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III. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS AND STATUS (Johnson)

1. Shark Conservation Act (SCA) letter

David Swatland will follow up with NMFS regarding a response to the RAC’s letter.

2. National Marine Sanctuary Act (NMSA) letter

Swatland provided an overview of the NMSA response letter dated April 9, 2014 that was sent to the RAC via email. The RAC discussed potentially contacting elected representatives to discuss strategy related to whether or not sanctuary designation for the NWHI should be pursued at this time and how the new draft Sanctuary Nomination Process might influence sanctuary designation in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) if it were pursued.

IV. MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS UPDATE (Johnson)

The deadline to submit notices through the federal register process is July 1st. One Native Hawaiian Alternate seat and one Native Hawaiian elder Alternate seat are vacant. Johnson will send out the application for the respective seats to RAC members via email so members can assist in recruiting a robust pool of applicants.

V. MONUMENT CO-TRUSTEE / MANAGEMENT AGENCY UPDATES

Cynthia Vanderlip provided an agency update for Kure Atoll State Seabird Sanctuary. Vanderlip highlighted the *Verbesina enceloides* (Golden Crownbeard) eradication project and related outplanting effort, and the US Coast Guard PCB removal efforts. Vanderlip also provided an update on the annual seabird populations at Kure Atoll, new records of visiting birds including owls, the whiskered tern and ravens. Vanderlip noted that owls are killing seabird chicks at Kure Atoll. In addition an unidentified deep water coral washed up on Kure. Polhemus told Vanderlip that she could send the coral to the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for identification.

Polhemus provided an agency update for FWS. Polhemus highlighted the success of the Millerbird translocation project and noted that of the 39 birds translocated to Laysan, only one was missing. Polhemus also highlighted issues with the Midway Atoll seawall and future efforts to remediate the seawall. He predicted that remediation of part of the seawall would occur within the next twelve months. Polhemus commented that a series of Best Management Practices will be implemented through the U.S. Army Corps permitting process for the seawall remediation. He also commented that Barb Mayer assisted with a telepresence “chat” from Midway Atoll with students from Saint Patrick’s School in Honolulu.

Swatland provided an agency update for the NWHICRER / Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS). Swatland highlighted the Monument Management Board (MMB) meeting on Midway Atoll and ONMS’ continued support of the Polynesian Voyaging Society’s World Wide Voyage. Swatland also talked about a number of public outreach events led by ONMS including the Waikikī Aquarium’s 110th Anniversary celebration, Lightning Strikes Twice film premier, and the Hana Limu festival. Additional items discussed include the March 14th opening of the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo, PMNM’s publication of numerous scientific articles, and the FALKOR mapping expedition.

Eric Roberts provided an update for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Roberts talked about USCG law enforcement patrols throughout the Pacific including the NWHI. Roberts highlighted the USCG’s boarding of fourteen domestic longline fishing vessels and their respective rate of high compliance. Brandon JimOn also provided a short update on NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) patrols of the Main Hawaiian Islands

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and commented that there have been no vessel strikes to date within the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation on 2014 Hawaiian monk seal field season (Littnan)

Charles Littnan provided an overview of the 2013 Hawaiian monk seal field season and population numbers. Littnan discussed challenges to monitoring the NWHI Hawaiian monk seal population including funding and access challenges. Littnan discussed the Nihoa monitoring camera project and Nihoa’s importance to the overall Hawaiian monk seal population. Littnan mentioned that his team is recruiting volunteers to sort through the Nihoa camera photos once the cameras are collected this summer. He discussed the outcome of the 2013 shark mitigation project – while no sharks were caught in 2013, the number of fishing hours (194 hook hours and 20 days fishing) was severely reduced.

Littnan provided an update on the 2014 Hawaiian monk seal field season. The seal team will have 26 days at sea on NOAA Ship HI‘IALAKAI and 21 days at sea on NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE. 2014 activities include: Deworming, translocation, captive care, and testing new population assessment tools (Unmanned Aerial Systems, Nihoa camera). Littnan also mentioned that his team would likely bring between 4-10 malnourished seals to the new seal facility in Kona for rehabilitation. Thompson asked about the monk seal population in the Main Hawaiian Islands. Littnan said the population in the MHI continues to grow and this past year NMFS was also able to census seals on Ni‘ihau for the first time.

2. Presentation on the Hawaiian monk seal PEIS (Sprague)

Sprague provided an overview update of the recently published Hawaiian monk seal Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEIS). She discussed the preferred alternative included in the PEIS which does not include translocations from the NWHI to the MHI. She also mentioned that the two-stage (temporary) translocation from the NWHI to MHI is not completely off the table forever and could be considered in the future. Johns asked if NMFS would have to do a new PEIS for the two-stage translocation – Sprague commented that it would depend how far into the future the two-stage translocation would be pursued. She also commented that NMFS would definitely have to amend its Endangered Species Act (ESA) / Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) permit if the two-stage translocation were pursued beyond the active dates of their permit. In summary the PEIS analyzes the impact of the two-stage translocation but it does not name it as the preferred alternative. Sprague provided an overview of the Cultural Impact Assessment that NMFS completed. Johns asked if the PMNM Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group submitted comments on the Cultural Impact Assessment or the PEIS. Walters commented that the collective group did not submit comments; however individual members did submit comments.

3. Presentation on Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) mission (Swatland)

Swatland provided an overview of the Puma UAS operations planned during the June Hawaiian monk seal cruise. The Puma UAS mission is to conduct Hawaiian monk seal and sea turtle surveys, marine debris surveys and cetacean surveys. Swatland commented that as a Best Management Practice. Puma operations will not occur during any Native Hawaiian cultural ceremonies undertaken during the same time as the UAS during June. The data captured through Puma will not be made available to the public.

Swatland then provided an overview of the Predator UAS. The Predator will fly one eight hour and one ten-hour mission within the NWHI during July. The purpose of both missions will be to conduct vessel traffic surveys, enforcement operations, and marine debris surveys. The Predator will fly at around 18,000 feet

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during the missions – its range is between 6,000-23,000 feet. Similar to Puma, the data collected through the Predator will not be disseminated to the public. Swatland noted that if the Predator or Puma capture imagery of alleged fishery violations, law enforcement agencies would have to also have additional evidence (e.g. supporting statements) to try fishery enforcement cases in court.

Paul asked about the daily cost to operate the Predator. Swatland said that while the cost to operate the Predator is less than a regular plane, it's still expensive as the Predator needs maintenance, pilots to remotely control the plane and gas. Paul recommended that PMNM work with the Hawai‘i congressional delegation to work out a biannual partnership with the DOD for use of the Predator in conjunction with RIMPAC which occurs every two years.

4. Presentation on 2013-2014 (Brown)

Tia Brown provided a brief overview on the number of permits issued in 2013 and provided a preview of the permit applications submitted for the 2014 field season. She explained that some permits get withdrawn by the applicants for various reasons including funding issues and logistical challenges. Brown also provided a preview of the 2013 Permitted Activities Report and mentioned that the PAR will be released in July and the RAC will get copies at their 28 July meeting.

VII. Update and Discussion: 5-Year Management Plan Review Subcommittee (Schug / Miller / Johnson)
Schug provided an overview of the 5-Year Monument Management Plan (MMP) Subcommittee report and mentioned that staff had an overall favorable review of the evaluation template. Schug mentioned that some staff could not fully disclose information related to the management plan process and funding. Schug mentioned that the evaluation template was sometimes difficult to use for the larger, more detailed action plans. Schug said that one of the subcommittee's recommendations was to include a table at the end of the template with overall recommendations organized by strategy and activity.

Miller provided a summary of the annual evaluation process and commented that the RAC was very helpful in making recommendations to improve the report template. Miller thanked the 5-Year MMP Subcommittee for their assistance.

VIII. Upcoming Advisory Council Summit (Paul)

Paul provided an update on the June 2-4 Advisory Council Summit in Galveston Texas. Paul asked the RAC what they'd like her to share at the summit. RAC members suggested that Paul show the new Native Hawaiian cultural briefing video. Wooley recommended that Paul discuss the idea of food security at the summit. Hunter commented that Paul could mention the World Wide Voyage (WWV) and PMNM's supporting role in the WWV. Johns brought up potentially talking about policy issues like sanctuary designation, Wilderness designation, and reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Swatland suggested that Paul might want to bring up the business advisory council.

IX. Business Advisory Council Meeting (Johnson)

Swatland provided an update related to the January Business Advisory Council (AC) meeting. He added that three additional businesses were invited to be a member of the Business AC: LL Bean Inc., Verizon, and Subaru. The RAC collectively requested that Paul recommend adding a Hawai‘i based business at the National SAC Summit in Galveston.

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X. Future interpretive center on O‘ahu (Paul)

Paul provided an update related to the visit that she and ONMS staff had with Hawai‘i Pacific University (HPU) at their site in Waimanālo. The purpose of the meeting was to potentially lease an area on the HPU property to build office spaces and an interpretive center like Mokupāpapa Discovery Center in Hilo. Paul commented that currently the sticking point is leasing the property and funding. Johns commented that he would like to speak with Department of Land and Natural Resources Chair William Aila regarding the leasing situation with HPU. Wong commented that the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) currently has an office on Kaua‘i; their lease will expire soon and they are looking for another, larger space on Kaua‘i. Lee commented that Wong should talk with Alexander and Baldwin about potentially leasing space from one of their properties on Kaua‘i.

XI. Discussion and potential actions related for the day’s agenda (All)

Action Items:

1. Hawaiian Monk Seal Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS): The deadline to comment is May 12th. RAC members will get comments from the cultural working group, and with the assistance from staff write a letter to submit during the public comment period. Rick Gaffney moved, Paul seconded the motion, the motion was approved unanimously.
2. 5-Year Management Plan Review Subcommittee: The subcommittee will review Oceans Ecosystem Literacy (OEL), Constituency Building and Outreach (CBO) and Maritime Heritage (MH) action plans next. The entire RAC will be invited to be members of the subcommittee.

Announcements:

1. Rowley commented that the Kaua‘i Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF) received a conservation award for their conservation efforts and is in the running for the national award. He also commented that PMRF is leading avian conservation in the Department of Defense (DOD). PMRF received a resolution of appreciation from the County of Kaua‘i for their efforts.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:21pm.

Items for next meeting:

1. NMFS update re: Magnusson process
2. PVS World Wide Voyage Meeting
3. Hoku to poll RAC for preference on Monday 7/28, 7/31, or 8/1