



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

RAC Virtual Meeting via Google Meet

August 23, 2023

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

RAC Voting Members Present: Linda Paul (Chair), Audrey Newman (Conservation Primary), Sam ‘Ohu Gon III (Conservation Primary), Solomon Kaho‘ohalahala (Native Hawaiian Elder Primary), Don Schug (Research Primary and Secretary), Haunani Kane (Research Primary), Mark Hixon (Research Primary), Rick Gaffney (Recreational Fishing Primary and Vice Chair), and Richard Lee (Ocean Related Tourism).

RAC Voting Members Absent: Pelika Andrade (Native Hawaiian Primary), Bonnie Kahapea-Tanner (Education Primary), Kalama‘ehu Holden Takahashi (Native Hawaiian Primary), and Judith Cucco (Citizen-At-Large Primary).

RAC Non-Voting Members Present: Kammie Tavares (Citizen At Large Alternate), Neal Langerman (Research Alternate), Robert Leinau (Research Alternate), William Walsh (Research Alternate), Doug Fetterly (Conservation Alternate), Nakoa Goo (Native Hawaiian Alternate), Rick Hoo (Recreational Fishing Alternate), Joshua DeMello (WPRFMC), Amanda Boyd (USFWS), Kaipo Perez (NOAA-PIRO), Brian Neilson (DLNR-DAR), Jared Underwood (USFWS), Brandon Jim On (NOAA-OLE), Cynthia Vanderlip (DLNR-DOFAW), Kealoha Pisciotta (Office of Hawaiian Affairs), Kim Hum (HIHWNMS).

RAC Non-Voting Members Absent: Heather Howard (Education and Outreach Alternate), Don Paul Badgley (Ocean-Related Tourism Alternate), Thorne Abbott Conservation Alternate), Emily Hauck (U.S. Department of Defense), Maile Norman (U.S. Coast Guard), Dan Polhemus (USFWS-ES).

ONMS Staff and Others: Eric Roberts (PMNM), Sara Wood (PMNM), Kanoe Morishige (PMNM), Malia Evans (PMNM), Alyssa Miller (PMNM), Brian Hauk (PMNM), Brianna Evancoe (PMNM), Kevin Kelly (PMNM), Chelsie Counsell (PMNM), Kilo Ka‘aawa Gonzales (PMNM), Justin Umholtz (PMNM), Virginia Branco (PMNM), LCDR William Carrier (HIHWNMS), Kristina Kekuwa (ONMS-PIR), Pua Borges (NMFS), John Klavitter (USFWS). Public: Robin Baird, Barb Mayer, Amy Baco-Taylor, Regina Kawamoto, Daniel Wagner (OET), Megan Cook (OET).

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome (Paul)

The meeting opened with a welcome by Chair Paul and opening protocol conducted by Kanoe Morishige.

Roll call, Introductions, Review and Approval of Agenda (Paul)

Roll call was taken by Sara Wood.

Review and approval of the agenda was conducted by Chair Paul. Representative Kaho‘ohalahala moved to accept the minutes, and Representative Gaffney seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously adopted. The next RAC meeting on October 18th was confirmed. It will be a virtual meeting.

Review & Approval of April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Paul)

Review and approval of the meeting minutes were conducted by Chair Paul. Representative Gaffney moved to accept the minutes, and Representative Gon seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Brief Review & Summary of Previous Issues, Action Items, and Status (Roberts)

In Progress

- Holomua Update/ DAR updates (Neilson)
 - Holomua initiative is in progress. Initial focus is on developing a Maui community led action plan. Held a recent series of 3 meetings to identify a diverse community navigation team to conduct issue identification and begin developing the action plan. Fourth meeting postponed until time is right to reconvene. Once the plan is completed, the navigation team will also work on implementation.
 - Five rule packages now going through the rulemaking process. For more information on the proposed rule packages, see the DAR website.
 1. Establishment of an ocean stewardship user fee - commercial operators would charge \$1 per passenger, funds collected would benefit ocean conservation projects
 2. Amendments to statewide herbivore rules (Manini, Kole, Kala, Uhu and Papa‘i Kualoa)
 3. Amendments to License and Permit Provisions: adding and amending definitions, providing for a recreational fishing license for marine waters; a commercial marine vessel license; and amendments to various licenses to sell.
 4. Rule for the Kipahulu Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area (bag limits, gear restrictions, some closed areas)
 5. Rule amendments for Molokini MLCB
 - Update on invasive *Unomia* soft coral outbreak in Pearl Harbor: This highly invasive species is now found over a 90 acre area. It is presumed confined to Pearl Harbor, and containment and eventual eradication efforts are being worked on. There may be lessons to be learned from response efforts occurring in Venezuela to eradicate this species.
- RAC question to ONMS staff: What is the trend of invasive species in PMNM? A: Monument managers' ability to conduct both surveillance and biosecurity measures has increased greatly over the years. With increased surveillance comes more detections, but that could be the result of the level of monitoring itself, and doesn't necessarily mean an increase in the number of invasives; so we can't know for sure what the trend might be.
- RAC question to ONMS staff: What public feedback is being received on sanctuary designation? A: Mostly supportive feedback, and some questions about what sanctuary designation means, and curiosity about Papahānaumokuākea as a special place worthy of sanctuary designation.

Monument Co-Trustee/Management Agency Update/Highlights

- NOAA-ONMS (Roberts)
 - *See ONMS update document at the RAC web page*
 - Education & Outreach
 - Merrie Monarch Festival
 - Earth Day Celebration
 - Collaboration with DOE to support Hōkūle‘a Voyage
 - World Ocean Day & 17th Anniversary of Papahānaumokuākea
 - Mokuḗāpapa Artist-in-Residence: Patrick Ching
 - Get Into Your Sanctuary Day held in Wai‘anae
 - Science, Research & Monitoring
 - *Chondria tumulosa* research
 - Acoustic monitoring
 - Walaka damage monitoring



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

- HCC outreach
- RAC- 'Fish Pono - Save Our Reefs' Campaign launched by Rep. Mark Hixon
- PMDP - congratulations and thanks
- Upcoming Events
 - Youth Challenge Career Awareness: August 25, 2023
 - Keiki O Ka 'Āina Ho'olaule'a at Pearlridge SC: Sept 16, 2023
 - E/V Nautilus in PMNM: Sept 1-28, 2023
 - UH School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology Open House: Oct 21, 2023
- NOAA Fisheries PIRO (Perez) *See PIRO report at the RAC web page*
 - Current leadership: Sarah Malloy, Acting PIRO Director, and Michelle Mansker, Acting Deputy Director
 - MEA fishing regulations are on schedule
 - UNESCO World Heritage reporting was completed for PMNM.
 - Mahalo to Kilo Ka'awa-Gonzales, Malia Evans and Kanoë Morishige for conducting cultural briefings
 - Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center Update
 - Charles Littnan named as Director, Tia Brown is Deputy Director
 - Protected Species Division - Monk seal camps in progress. Lalo field season will culminate in September. No camps at other sites, but will conduct short surveys at various sites as possible.
 - Hawaiian Islands Cetacean and Ecosystem Assessment Survey is in progress, runs from July through December. The survey covers approximately 1.8 million square nautical miles of waters around all Hawaiian Islands out to 200 nautical miles offshore including areas of PMNM.
 - Ecosystem Science Division surveys scheduled for July-August 2024, partly in PMNM (last surveys done in 2019)
- USFWS Refuges (Boyd) *See USFWS report at the RAC web page*
 - Kamole Update- no *Cenchrus echinatus* found in the last visit. Will return to look in Oct. Have installed a weather station; also conducted a core sampling project in partnership with UH and USGS. Also conducted Hawaiian monk seal surveys with NMFS; as well as Hawaiian green turtle monitoring and tagging.
 - In June, held an 81st anniversary Battle of Midway ceremony at Midway; the ceremony was shared virtually with the living veterans of the BOM.
 - Our Planet II Series on Netflix - June episode, has segments featuring Kamole.
 - Nihoa *Cenchrus echinatus* eradication work will continue through Sept. FWS is conducting 2x year efforts to eradicate this invasive species
 - Midway Seabird Protection Project Update: 90 volunteers and staff worked for over 3 months to protect native wildlife and eradicate mice on Sand Island. But despite best efforts, mice are still being found on Midway. Control efforts continue as FWS transitions into a learning and mitigation phase. Have eliminated food sources, but the root cause of persistence remains unknown. Will continue with monitoring. New techniques and strategies for protecting LAYDU and other wildlife have been developed.



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

- Hiring and Staff Updates: new Midway manager is Elaine Johnson. A new deputy manager also has been hired, name to be announced at the end of September.

- USFWS Ecological Services (Polhemus) *See full report at the RAC web page*
Highlights
 - 2023 globally is the third warmest on record, and with the hottest summer ever recorded in the Northern hemisphere.
 - El Niño conditions are now present, with a 95% probability that they will persist until at least February 2024
 - PMNM coral reefs are not experiencing heat stress at this time, no bleaching is likely until late summer or early fall of 2023, if it occurs.
 - Tropical cyclone season has started, and several systems have already passed through the vicinity of Hawaii, creating significant impacts.
 - Sea level continues to rise at 3-5 mm per year, and this trend is increasing.

- State of Hawai‘i DLNR-DAR *See report above on page 2*

- State of Hawai‘i DLNR-DOFAW (Vanderlip)
 - 4 people now at field camp at Holaniku, supported by the Kure Atoll Conservancy.
 - NFWF, State of Hawaii and private donors are the current sources of support for Holaniku programs
 - Next crew comes in October (5 people). DOFAW is still accepting applications, see the Kure Atoll Conservancy website for details.
 - Invasive *Verbesina encelioides* continues to be suppressed.
 - Found *Culex* mosquito last month, now doubling down on control efforts.
 - Black footed albatross monitoring outcome: 60% nesting success this season, pretty good survival rate.

- Office of Hawaiian Affairs (Pisciotta)
 - Interim OHA CEO is Colin Kippen
 - OHA’s August issue of *Ka Wai Ola* online magazine focused on Ocean Policy, with feature articles on Papahānaumokuākea, PRI and deep sea mining. [Link to the August Issue:](#)
 - OHA participating in sanctuary designation.

Supporting Agency Updates/Highlights

- Enforcement (Jim On)
 - Conducting joint patrols with USCG in Samoa.
 - 3 new officers hired (O‘ahu, Guam, Samoa).
 - Investigating Hawaiian Monk Seal deaths, in partnership with NMFS.

Presentations

- Ocean Exploration Trust/Nautilus (Wagner, Cook)
 - Upcoming expedition (Sept 1-28) in Papahānaumokuākea.
 - Focus on previously unsurveyed areas.
 - Multi-disciplinary.
 - Engage scientists and the public through real time streaming,
 - Incorporate Hawaiian values and worldviews.



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

- o Publicly-accessible data.
- o RAC is invited to participate virtually via the YouTube Channel at <https://nautiluslive.org/> during the expedition. There is a chat box to ask questions. Other ways to participate are through the educator ship-to-shore events, and the scientist ashore program which provides access to other data streams on the ship and communication with scientists onboard. See details on the OET website. Malia Evans is acting as Native Hawaiian Cultural Liaison on this expedition.

- o Blog:
<https://nautiluslive.org/blog/2023/03/29/ala-aumoana-kai-uli-naming-expedition-papahanaumokuakea-marine-national-monument>

- Sanctuary Designation Timelines for PRI & PMNM (Roberts)
 - o PRI Timeline: Public scoping was held in June, staff are currently analyzing the public input and drafting the sanctuary documents. Targeting winter '23-spring '24 for the public roll out of the sanctuary package.
 - o Papahānaumokuākea Timeline: Draft documents are currently in review/clearance phase. Hoping for clearance by the end of November. Goal is to release in December 2023, and hold public meetings to collect comments after the holiday season. Typically a 60 day public review period. During the first month of the period, only written comments can be received, NOAA cannot hold public meetings to gather comments until after Day 30. Public meetings will then be held throughout the state, in person on all islands, and also virtually. Meeting dates TBD.
 - o RAC sanctuary designation workshop/work session is proposed to review the content of the draft sanctuary package.
 - January timeframe.
 - Summary briefings on the three documents.
 - Discussions about areas where the RAC may wish to provide input.
 - Could be 1 or 2 days, could be virtual (informational) or in person for both or either day.

- Discussion on possible workshop on the draft sanctuary package
 - o Several representatives asked for a virtual option.
 - o PESS recommendations:
 - Hold workshop 1 week (or more) post-publication to allow for RAC review of sanctuary package before the workshop.
 - Recommends 2 days duration
 - Day 1: Informational, ONMS presentations on Sanctuary Designation Package. Hybrid format
 - Day 2: RAC begins developing RAC testimony. Use breakout groups to get things done more quickly). Also "identify info materials, etc. that would support RAC members in their constituent outreach efforts" to the RAC tasks on Day 2 of the workshop. In person format.
 - PESS would like to assist with coordination of the workshop.
 - PESS recommends holding additional meetings following the workshop, for the RAC to continue working on their comments on the sanctuary designation package.
 - PESS recommends that the ONMS try to extend public comment period beyond 60 days



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

- Rep Schug recommended that following the workshop, each individual RAC representative reach out to their respective constituencies to inform them about the sanctuary package.
 - A vote was taken re authorizing the PESS to work with staff on workshop development. This was agreed upon by consensus.

Discussion on possible RAC outreach during the public review period:

- Several representatives identified a desire to begin conducting early outreach prior to the release of the WPRFMC's fishing regulation and the ONMS's draft sanctuary package. One suggestion was for a focused set of talking points about fisheries. Another was for a position paper. A third suggestion was for a news release or paper stating 'what the place means to us', broadening the focus beyond fishing (to culture, science, maritime heritage etc).
- Chair Paul asked if the PESS could begin to shape the outline/scope for this paper. No vote taken or decision made.
- The RAC and staff discussed scheduling uncertainties associated with the draft public review period. ONMS hopes to have a better idea of timing by October .

Discussion

- Work Plan (Roberts)
 - Previous RAC workplan was 2018-2021. Need to start thinking about an update in the coming months
 - Some items that staff have suggested for potential inclusion are: helping staff develop a volunteer program, on O'ahu; developing a mentorship program internal to the RAC; involving the RAC or subcommittee on reviewing permit application; developing a RAC calendar, managed by the Secretary; doing a historical research project and producing a RAC timeline (many things have not been documented); and helping with RAC and Staff recruitment processes.
 - Discussion on workplan timing
 - Chair Paul suggested that the PESS could discuss the coordination of the workplan effort at its next meeting, and that they could also get started on the workplan itself, with RAC permission.. Other members suggested postponing the workplan until after sanctuary designation public hearings as they felt the sanctuary workshop and outreach to be higher priorities. No vote taken/decisions made on either suggestion.
 - Chair Paul: Proposed holding a PESS meeting next Wednesday, August 30th, at 2:00 pm, pending staff and committee availability. If feasible, staff will send out information and an invitation.
 - Discussion on workplan content
 - Regarding the future workplan content, Chair Paul made the following suggestions. No vote taken or decision made:
 - The Kahuapa'a Working Group could lead the historical timeline project.
 - The executive committee could lead the recruitment support process
 - The permit application review could be delegated to a subcommittee
 - The volunteer program and handbook could be delegated to a subcommittee
 - Rep Schug stated that he would be willing to lead the RAC calendar effort, in conjunction with staff.
 - Rep Gaffney stated that the Kahuapa'a Working Group would be willing to lead the historical timeline project.



Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve

RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

- Recruitment - Fall 2023
 - ONMS will be accepting applications for 8 seats including primaries and alternates. This includes members whose terms are expiring and will therefore need to reapply. Stay tuned for emails regarding the application process and notification of expiring terms.
 - The review panel will nominate their top applicants. The Superintendent will submit his recommendation to ONMS headquarters at which point ONMS reviews and commences background checks.
 - We expect the process to start in mid-September and have the new members on board before the designation workshop.
 - Kim Hum - HIHWNMS also is recruiting for its SAC, please apply.
- Update regarding “Kūpuna” Council (Morishige)
 - Kahuapa‘a Working Group is the new name. Charter has been completed (see document at the RAC web page).
 - This group was developed as a working group, because it requires the participation of previous RAC members and other community members
 - The organizers asked for RAC approval of the creation of this working group.
 - A vote was taken, and the action was approved by consensus
- Update from PESS- this update consisted of recommendations for the proposed workshop, and was provided during the prior workshop discussion (see above).

Public Comment

Kim Hum - HIHWNMS Superintendent:

- Our hearts are with everyone who has been impacted by the devastating Maui fires.
- HIHWNMS is committed to providing ongoing support for recovery efforts. We have conducted surveys at Lahaina Harbor with the HIHWNMS vessel to map the harbor bottom. We also have assisted with recovery efforts including carrying supplies to Lahaina by boat when roads were closed, and we are participating in a working group to monitor and assess impacts to coastal resources, including water quality and coral reefs.
- HIHWNMS Staff and volunteers are all okay.

Decision Making, Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks

- Next meeting date: October 18, 2023, virtual
- Discuss and determine 2024 meeting schedule at the October meeting

Next RAC Meeting Date: October 18, 2023