

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

**July 28 9:00am – 4:00pm**

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

Meeting Minutes  
July 28, 2014

**ATTENDEES**

Voting Members: Tim Johns (State of Hawai‘i, Chair); Linda Paul (Conservation, Vice-Chair); Kem Lowry (Citizen-At-Large, Secretary); Rick Lee (Ocean-Related Tourism); (Research); Gail Grabowsky (Education); Cindy Hunter (Research); Brian Bowen (Research Alternate for Gilmartin); Jessica Wooley (Conservation); and Laura Thompson (Conservation).

Non-Voting Members: Dennis Rowley (Department of Defense); David Swatland (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (NWHI CRER)); Eric Roberts (U.S. Coast Guard); Malia Chow (Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary); and Samantha Brooke (NOAA / National Marine Fisheries Service). [On Phone]: David Laist (Marine Mammal Commission); and Asuka Ishizaki (Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPFMC)).

Absent: Rick Gaffney (Recreational Fishing); Don Schug (Research); Bobby Gomes (Commercial Fishing); David Laist (Marine Mammal Commission); Michael Lesser (National Science Foundation); Louis “Buzzy” Agard (Native Hawaiian); Tammy Harp (Native Hawaiian); Pelika Bertelmann (Native Hawaiian); and Bill Gilmartin (Research).

[All Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) Staff]: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS): Hoku Johnson, Kanani Medeiros, and Alyssa Miller; Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR); Maria Carnevale; and David Smith; Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) - Brad Wong; US Fish and Wildlife Service – Ecological Services (USFWS) Dan Polhemus; and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) – LTJG Rula Deisher.

[Members of the Public]: Barbara Mayer; Inga Gibson; and Stefanie Brendl.

**PURPOSES OF THE MEETING:**

- 1) Receive updates on ONMS initiatives and related efforts
- 2) Receive updates related to the 2014 field season
- 3) Potential Action Item: *Discussion / Approval on Joint MPA FAC & SAC Call to Action*

**I. CALL TO ORDER (JOHNS)**

Council Vice-Chair Linda Paul called the meeting to order. Introductions followed.

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

Mr. Tim Johns reviewed the day’s agenda. Minutes from April 16, 2014 were reviewed. Ms. Laura Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes and Dr. Cindy Hunter 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: Ms. Hoku Johnson provided the response letter dated 10 January 2014 from the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Ms. Johnson apologized for temporarily misplacing the letter during ONMS' move from Hawai‘i Kai to the NOAA Inouye Regional Center (IRC). The NMFS response letter states that NMFS is working on reviewing and responding to all public comments submitted as part of the proposed regulations to implement the domestic provisions of the Shark Conservation Act.
2. Hawaiian monk seal Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEIS) comments: No final comments were submitted. The PEIS is now final and the Record of Decision is located at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/eis/hawaiianmonksealeis.htm>

IV. MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS UPDATE (Johnson)

There are currently two open alternate seats on the RAC: (1) Native Hawaiian alternate elder and (2) Native Hawaiian alternate. Ms. Johnson stated that the federal register notice advertising these two vacant positions will be released on August 15<sup>th</sup> and will be sent to the RAC list-serve once it's published.

V. MONUMENT CO-TRUSTEE / MANAGEMENT AGENCY UPDATES (Member Agencies)

State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR): Ms. Maria Carnevale reported that the Division of Aquatic Resources is continuing with its strategic planning process headed by the new Director of the Division of Aquatic Resources, Mr. Frazer McGilvray. There is also a new Director of Division and Forestry, Ms. Lisa Hadway. Mr. David Smith reported on the ant eradication and verbesina eradication efforts at Kure and also discussed future Laysan duck translocation efforts.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS): Dr. Dan Polhemus reported on FWS ongoing efforts to restore the seawall at Midway Atoll and the current effort to assess the pollution situation at Tern Island, French Frigate shoals jointly with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, Polhemus highlighted the upcoming FWS Nihoa monitoring cruise in August.

NOAA Report (Swatland): Mr. David Swatland reported on ONMS activities from April 17 to July 27, 2014. Mr. Swatland discussed recent ongoing efforts by ONMS to both support the other Pacific sanctuaries and actively manage PMNM. Efforts included assistance to the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NSMAS) to remove Crown-of-Thorns Sea stars (COTS); Google Streetview; and support for the Marine Archeology Survey Techniques (MAST) class. In addition, Swatland discussed recent research and field efforts in PMNM including the June 2014 Intertidal Monitoring cruise; assistance with surveying the black pipe at Tern Island; and the August Reef Assessment and Monitoring Program cruise. Dr. Hunter asked why PMNM assisted with COTS removal in American Samoa, Swatland responded that the PMNM Research / Field Team members are qualified rebreather divers. Rebreathers allow personnel to stay underwater longer and allow for removal of COTS at depths that traditional SCUBA cannot reach; therefore PMNM's dive team was necessary to support COTS removal in NSMAS. In addition, Swatland expressed that Mr. Dan Basta, the Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries recently communicated the need for all sites across the Pacific region to support each other. Providing support for COTS removal was one way for PMNM to provide that support.

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U.S. Coast Guard: Mr. Eric Roberts provided an overview of the USCG’s enforcement efforts including a patrol in June and the USCG’s involvement in the recent Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) operations in the NWHI. Mr. Roberts also introduced LTJG Rula Deisher who recently came to Hawai‘i from Washington State and will be serving as the USCG’s Living Marine Resource Coordinator.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: Presentation on Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) Management Plan Review (MPR) (Chow):

Dr. Malia Chow presented an overview of HIHWNMS’s management plan review efforts. She discussed new activities proposed in the new draft management plan including the proposal to protect special places including Maunalua Bay on Oahu and Pila‘a on Kaua‘i.

Mr. Johns asked about the nexus between HIHWNMS and PMNM and the science between connecting the two. Dr. Brian Bowen responded that there is indeed scientific evidence that larvae in the main Hawaiian Islands actually “seeds” the NWHI. Mr. Johns stated that the RAC could comment on HIHWNMS MPR, but might be more appropriate to submit comments as individuals unless there are specific management actions proposed in HIHWNMS review that directly affect resources in the NWHI. Dr. Polhemus commented that there are resources that connect throughout the archipelago including sea turtles, sharks, seabirds, etc. Dr. Bowen commented that for megafauna one would have to manage individual species. Dr. Bowen provided examples of tuna and whales as specific megafauna. Dr. Chow then discussed timeline and stated that her staff briefed the land board once already but the draft proposal will go in front of the land board and to the governor for review.

Presentation on Polynesian Voyaging Society Worldwide Voyage (Saffrey): Ms. Maya Saffrey provided a presentation on the Worldwide Voyage (WWV) of the double-hulled sailing canoes Hokule‘a and Hikianalia. The canoes are currently traveling from Tahiti to the Cook Islands and plan to reach New Zealand in November 2014. Ms. Saffrey showed two videos of Hokule‘a and Hikianalia in Tahiti.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Barb Mayer provided a presentation on her NWHI education and outreach efforts. She urged the RAC to push for more educational funds, specifically related to telepresence and communication between biologists living in the NWHI and students in Hawaii and potentially elsewhere in the world.

Ms. Inga Gibson (The Humane Society of the United States) provided an update on the Shark Conservation Act. She stated that NMFS has already determined that some states including California, Delaware, Maryland, Oregon and Washington state laws are not pre-empted by the SCA. She hopes that Hawai‘i will join that list. She also mentioned that she’s working on policy issues in the Pacific including American Samoa, Guam and others, mostly involving domestic animal issues in those islands.

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VIII. Review of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Activities (Swatland)

Mr. Swatland provided a presentation on the June Puma UAS operations and the July Ikhana operations. The Puma aircraft is hand launched off a ship or land and operates at lower elevations and the Ikhana is the same size as a small plane and operates at high elevations (18,000 – 20,000 feet). Mr. Swatland showed video of both the Puma operations at French Frigate Shoals and the Ikhana operating off Nihoa. Both missions were successful as they recorded footage usable for management including counting sea turtles and enforcement.

Ms. Thompson asked if the Ikhana could land and take off at Midway, Mr. Swatland said technically yes, it could, but it would have to do so at night due to wildlife concerns. Dr. Bowen asked what would happen if the Ikhana controllers lost contact with the aircraft. Mr. Dennis Rowley said that the aircraft is programmed to gain elevation and circle until contact can be made with the aircraft.

IX. Permit Update:

Ms. Tia Brown provided a brief presentation on the 2014 Monument permitting season and discussed the newly completed 2013 Permitted Activities Report (PAR). Ms. Johnson stated that the PAR continues to be the most downloaded document on the Monument’s website. Dr. Bowen asked if there was any progress on the Material Transfer Permitting Process. Ms. Johnson commented that the process is moving along and the federal managing agencies hope to provide a draft MTP package for State of Hawaii review by the end of calendar year 2014. Mr. Johns requested that the RAC be sent a list of 2014 permittees to review and choose which permittees they’d like presentations from at upcoming RAC meetings.

X. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION: Update on Presidential Proposal to expand Pacific Monuments (Swatland)

There is a town hall meeting on August 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:00pm – 7:00pm at the Ala Moana Hotel. Written comments will be accepted until August 15<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Polhemus commented that the proposal for the outer pacific monuments would likely include information expanding the boundary and that fishing was likely going to be a topic brought up at the town hall meeting. Mr. Johns said that one comment may be that they don’t want the expansion of any new Monument to impede on the budget of PMNM. Bowen discussed the biological link between Johnston Atoll and PMNM and Kingman/Palmyra and PMNM. The RAC collectively decided to submit comments during the public comment period. Ms. Paul volunteered to draft the comments. It is noted that no action was taken to approve the comments at this meeting, later action was taken whereby RAC members voted to submit the comments Ms. Paul drafted. It is also noted that Mr. Johns and Dr. Hunter abstained from the vote.

XI. Update on Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management Conservation Reauthorization Act (Swatland)

Mr. Swatland stated that there likely will be no update on Magnuson-Stevens until after the elections. Mr. Swatland will ask NMFS to present an update on Magnuson-Stevens at an upcoming RAC meeting as appropriate.

XII. Update on Sanctuary Nomination Process (Swatland / Paul)

Ms. Paul relayed her conversation at the June annual SAC Chairs meeting in Galveston whereby ONMS Director Daniel Basta communicated to Ms. Paul that the RAC could nominate the NWHICRER as a

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sanctuary through the Sanctuary Nomination Process (SNP). Ms. Paul discussed the seven criteria in the SNP and highlighted criteria number three which states, “The area supports present and potential economic uses, such as: tourism; commercial and recreational fishing; subsistence and traditional uses; diving; and other recreational uses that depend on conservation and management of the area's resources.” and the importance of having multiple discovery centers that “bring the place to the people” in the main Hawaiian Islands. The RAC discussed the concern that if the NWHICRER were to be proposed as a national marine sanctuary, that the second sanctuary designation process might re-open the strong protections implemented through the EO and Proclamation 8031.

XIII. Update on June Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) Summit in Galveston, TX (Paul)  
Ms. Paul provided a brief update on the June SAC summit in Galveston and referred to the SAC’s joint effort with the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Federal Advisory Committee to draft the SAC Call to Action which emphasizes the importance and value of national marine sanctuaries to communities. It is noted that RAC members viewed their voting on the SAC Call to Action as supporting the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary which has a lot of human use compared to the NWHI. RAC members did not like the title of #1 in the document, “Invite People to Play (Responsibly) in MPAs.” as it connoted recreation and additional, unnecessary human use. Action: Ms. Paul made a motion to approve the SAC Call to Action, Dr. Hunter seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

XIV. Update on 2013 Evaluation Process and 5-Year Evaluation / MMP Review Subcommittee (Lowry / Miller / Johnson)  
Ms. Johnson provided a brief presentation on the 2013 evaluation process and status on MMP review. The 2013 annual evaluation process is almost complete and participation by all the agencies continues to improve each year. There are currently no plans to formally undertake MMP review due to lack of funding.

XV. Discussion and potential actions related to the day’s agenda (All)

1. Action: Mr. Johns proposed the RAC draft a letter of support for Mr. Swatland to serve as permanent Superintendent. Ms. Thompson seconded the motion, the motion was carried unanimously.
2. Schedule of 2015 meetings—Tentative schedule of April, July and late October / early November.
3. Announcements
  - i. Ms. Paul provided an update on the O‘ahu discovery center. Ms. Paul visited Hawai‘i Pacific University (HPU) and was offered a temporary building and a corner lot. HPU came before the land board and DLNR owns the land on which HPU and Sea Life Park sits. Chair William Aila (DLNR) considers it a great partnership as it is in alignment with DLNR’s mission. It is intended to be a joint effort between the Hawaiian Island Humpback Whales National Marine Sanctuary and PMNM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Johns adjourned the meeting for the day.