

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

**Non-Government (Voting)**

William Aila, Jr (Chair)  
*State of Hawai'i*

Linda Paul (Vice Chair)  
*Conservation*

Rick Gaffney (Secretary)  
*Recreational Fishing*

Pelika Andrade  
*Native Hawaiian*

Judith Cucco  
*Citizen-at-Large*

Gail Grabowsky  
*Education*

Tammy Harp  
*Native Hawaiian*

Cindy Hunter  
*Research*

Solomon Kaho'ohalahala  
*Native Hawaiian Elder*

Jean Kenyon  
*Research*

Richard Lee  
*Ocean-Related Tourism*

Don Schug  
*Research*

Phil Fernandez  
*Commercial Fishing (acting Primary)*

Carol Wilcox  
*Conservation*

Jessica Wooley  
*Conservation*

**Government (Non-Voting)**

Athline Clark  
*Papahānaumokuākea MNM*

Nancy Daschbach  
*HIHW National Marine Sanctuary*

Hoku Ka'aekuahiwi-Pousima  
*NOAA Fisheries PIRO*

Janice Fukawa  
*U.S. Department of Defense*

Eric Roberts  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

Kitty Simonds  
*WESPAC*

Kate Toniolo  
*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Vacant  
*Marine Mammal Commission*

Vacant  
*National Science Foundation*

*Meeting March 20, 2019*

*9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.*

*Daniel K. Inouye International Airport Interisland Conference Center*

*Conference Room 2 Kamani*

**Meeting Minutes**

**ATTENDEES:**

RAC Voting Members Present: Linda Paul (Conservation, Acting Chair); Rick Gaffney (Recreational Fishing, Secretary); Pelika Andrade (Native Hawaiian); Tammy Harp (Native Hawaiian, by phone); Jean Kenyon (Research); Judith Cucco (Citizen-at-Large); Solomon Kaho'ohalahala (Native Hawaiian Elder); Don Schug (Research, by phone); Phil Fernandez (Commercial Fishing, acting primary); Gail Grabowsky (Education); Jessica Wooley (Conservation); and Bob Leinau (Conservation, acting primary for Wilcox).

RAC Voting Members Absent: William Aila Jr. (State of Hawai'i, Chair); Cindy Hunter (Research); and Richard Lee (Ocean-Related Tourism).

RAC Non-Voting Members Present: Shad Kane (Native Hawaiian Elder alternate, by phone); Rick Hoo (Recreational Fishing alternate); Athline Clark (Office of National Marine Sanctuaries [ONMS] / Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument [PMNM]); Hoku Ka'aekuahiwi-Pousima (National Marine Fisheries Service [NMFS] Pacific Islands Region Office [PIRO]); Kate Toniolo (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [FWS] Refuges); Dan Polhemus (FWS Ecological Services); Janice Fukawa (Department of Defense, US Navy); and Zachary Yamada (Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council [WPFMC]).

RAC Non-Voting Members Absent: Nancy Daschbach (ONMS/Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary [HIHWNMS]) and Eric Roberts (U.S. Coast Guard [USCG]).

ONMS Staff: Nicole Evans, Alyssa Miller, Kalani Quiocho, Alan Lum, Cindy Among-Serrao, Jon Martinez, Jennifer Crawford, and Justin Rivera.

Other Agency Staff: Brad Wong (Office of Hawaiian Affairs [OHA]); Maria Carnevale (State of Hawai'i, Department of Land and Natural Resources [DLNR] Division of Aquatic Resources [DAR]); Brandon Jim On (NOAA Office of Law Enforcement [OLE]); Charles Littnan (NMFS, by phone); Kevin O'Brien (NMFS); and Tiare Holm (National Marine Sanctuary Foundation [NMSF]).

Members of the Public: Barb Mayer (by phone), Shannon Amiot, Kitt Langdell, and Jacob Roberts.

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

Acting Chair Linda Paul called the meeting to order. Introductions followed.

## II. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Paul)

There were no changes to the published agenda. The council approved the meeting minutes from the October 11, 2018 meeting.

## III. BRIEF REVIEW & SUMMARY PREVIOUS ISSUES, ACTION ITEMS AND STATUS

1. RAC/SAC Action: Letter to ONMS Director John Armor regarding Executive Orders 13792 and 13795 (Clark): Recommendations have been made to Department of Interior. No recommendations have been made to Department of Commerce.

2. ONMS Action: Sanctuary designation and monument management plan (Clark): No update. ONMS is not moving forward with the public process until the final recommendations of Executive Orders 13792 and 13795 are released.

3. State of Hawai'i action: Keep RAC informed on 30x30 Initiative throughout election year. Inform RAC if there is an opportunity for public input or comment. (Carnevale): A new 30x30 Coordinator has been selected, Brad Stubbs. Carnevale will invite Mr. Stubbs to present at the next RAC meeting.

**State of Hawai'i action:** The RAC requests a presentation on the State of Hawai'i 30x30 Initiative.

4. ONMS Action: Keep RAC informed of NFWF funding and activities (Clark): No update.

5. NMFS Action: Keep RAC informed of any changes to the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Ka'aekuahiwi-Pousima): There is a draft of proposed changes to the Act, mostly suggested changes to definitions. Ka'aekuahiwi-Pousima will make this draft available to the Council.

6. USFWS Action: The RAC requests an update on funding and ability to maintain Henderson Airfield on Midway Atoll (Toniolo): FWS working with the FAA to maintain Henderson Airfield to reseal runway and striping. Recreational Fishing representative Rick Gaffney asked how often the runway is used. FWS responded that use of the runway has been stable over the last few years and has consisted mainly of resupplying Midway. Other questions included runway size and funding. Conservation representative Linda Paul requested a report regarding the number of emergency landings that have taken place at Henderson Airfield since the U.S. Navy left in 1993.

7. RAC Recruitment (Clark): Recruitment was put on hold because of the government shutdown and staggering with HIHWNMS SAC recruitment. ONMS will recruit for the following seats: Conservation Alternate (Cucco's old seat), Research Alternate (Kenyon's old seat), Commercial Fishing Primary (Walker's old seat), and Native Hawaiian Primary (seat turnover, Harp). Recruitment will be open April 1, 2019.

#### IV. MONUMENT CO-TRUSTEE/MANAGEMENT AGENCY UPDATE/HIGHLIGHTS

1. NOAA-ONMS report (Clark): Ms. Clark presented a PowerPoint of ONMS highlights from the past few months. Features included: a learning exchange between ONMS/PMNM and Juan Fernández Islands, Chile; Mokupāpapa Discovery Center welcomed its 800,000<sup>th</sup> visitor; E/V *Nautilus* Completes the “Enigmatic Seamounts” Expedition in PMNM; and ONMS/PMNM Scientists and Hollings Scholar Publish Paper on 3D Photogrammetry of Coral Reefs. The PowerPoint version of the ONMS presentation and the full written report are available on the PMNM/RAC website.

2. NOAA-NMFS report (Ka‘aekuahiwi-Pousima): Members the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM) Community Group in concert with the Udall Foundation have been selected. They Community Group is hoping to have a virtual meeting at the end of April 2019. The purpose of the PRIMNM Community Group is to give input to the agencies on the management, proper care, and effective stewardship of the Monument from diverse stakeholder perspectives, and to provide a forum for discussion of issues of concern and possible solutions for inclusion in a comprehensive PRIMNM Management Plan.

3. State of Hawai‘i DAR report (Carnevale): Ms. Carnevale provided a written report to the RAC on updates from the State of Hawai‘i DLNR-DAR. The State of Hawai‘i DLNR-DAR report is available on the PMNM/RAC website.

**State of Hawai‘i DAR action:** Update the RAC on any related bills passed this legislative session.

4. FWS Refuges report (Toniolo): Jared Underwood has been selected as the new USFWS superintendent for PMNM. The Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for seawall repairs at Midway Atoll NWR was signed in January. This authorizes incremental repairs of the seawall over the next 10 years. The Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Midway Seabird Restoration Project was signed in February. The project will be implemented in July of 2020. Ms. Toniolo also gave an update on French Frigate Shoals since Hurricane Walaka. Highlights from the presentation are available on the PMNM/RAC website.

5. FWS Ecological Services report (Polhemus): Mr. Polhemus provided a summary on climate indicators from the PMNM Climate Change Working Group. The presentation is available on the PMNM/RAC website.

6. OHA report (Wong): OHA has finalized and executed a contract with *Nohopapa Hawai‘i* to develop curriculum for mele and oli for PMNM. The Edith Kanaka‘ole Foundation and Nā Kālai Wa‘a are permitted through OHA to go to Mokumanamana for this summer’s solstice. OHA is continuing to work on the Native Hawaiian Plan and are currently editing drafts. OHA continues to work with USFWS to allow practitioners access to feathers under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) permit.

7. Update on enforcement activities NOAA OLE (Jim On): NOAA OLE is currently focused on whale season and actively going to HIHWNMS. Without confirmed numbers, OLE is noticing more whales this season. During the government shutdown, OLE had limited resources.

#### V. BRIEFINGS AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL ACTIONS

##### 1. Access to Monument for management operations and research

Rick Gaffney led a discussion on access to Monument management operations and research. NOAA ship *Hi'ialakai*, the primary research vessel for ONMS/PMNM, is currently in dry-dock with extensive repairs. Vessel access is uncertain for the next few field seasons.

**ONMS Action:** Invite NOAA Office of Aviation and Marine Operations (OAMO) to present to the RAC.

#### VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Shannon Amiot: Ms. Amoit thanked the Council for their efforts and noted their influence on a Federal level. Ms. Amoit supports restoring the *Hi'ialakai* as that seems to be the quickest way to continue research. Ms. Amoit also encouraged the Council to share their support for access to Monument for management operations and research with local organizations and nonprofits to educate the public and garner more support.

Kitt Langdell: Mr. Langdell commented that the RAC has influence at the federal level. Private funding is good, but the RAC should try to work to keep and possibly increase public funding and work at a grass roots level. Mr. Langdell also noted appreciation for the opportunity to learn about what the RAC is doing and having the ability to comment publicly.

Jacob Roberts: Mr. Roberts appreciated Native Hawaiian Elder representative Solomon Kaho'ohalahala's comments regarding Kanaloa and cultural time frames. Mr. Roberts noted the comments were impactful and appreciated.

#### VII. PRESENTATION AND UPDATES

1. Council Vice-Chair Election: Conservation representative Linda Paul was nominated for the vice-chair position. Ms. Paul accepted the position. She will serve a two-year term, until March 2021. Under the Council Charter that was adopted in July 2017, this will be Ms. Paul's first term as vice-chair.

2. Science Symposium Report (Martinez/ONMS): ONMS/PMNM Marine Scientist Jon Martinez presented on the *Symposium on Science in Support of Archipelagic Management Program*. Research representative Jean Kenyon stressed the importance of research symposiums and how they need to occur more frequently. Recreational Fishing representative Rick Gaffney expressed to the Council what great science was presented at the Symposium. Mr. Gaffney urged other councilmembers to attend future symposiums. Citizen-at-Large representative Judith Cucco thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend. The Symposium Program, which includes abstracts, is available on the RAC website under the March 20 meeting.

**ONMS Action:** The RAC requests a presentation by Dr. Richard Pyle (Bishop Museum)

3. Marine Debris Presentation (O'Brien/NMFS): Kevin O'Brien from the Marine Debris program presented to the Council. An estimated 52 tons of derelict fishing gear accumulates in the Monument each year and this does not include debris that accumulates on shorelines.

The annual Marine Debris Cruise removes a fraction of these 52 tons. Each cruise lasts about one month, of which about 10 days is transit time. The average coverage of the cruise is 4-5 locations, using swim surveys, tow-surveys and shoreline reconnaissance. The factors that confound the quantification of accumulation include: level of effort, elapsed time between removals, rotating targeted areas for removal, and temporal and seasonal variability of accumulation.

A 2013 study at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge for shoreline debris at Eastern Island documented over 20 tons of debris on beaches within a 10-month period. Beginning in 2017, this study was expanded to five sites across the Monument.

Additional research initiatives have been launched to quantify damage to reefs using 3-D photomosaic technology and explore efficacy of UAS for use in detecting derelict fishing gear/hotspots (tested at Pearl & Hermes).

The Council asked if there are any trends in fishing nets. Extensive data has been gathered on nets, although most data has not yet been analyzed. However, it is known that 90% of the derelict nets came from outside Hawai'i.

4. Hawaiian Monk Seal (HMS) and Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle (HGT) Updates (Littnan/NMFS): Dr. Charles Littnan gave a presentation to the Council on the HMS and HGT. Highlights include: HMS total abundance currently 1,429 individuals with roughly 1,100 in NWHI. Population growth is about 2% per year, which is slow. Variable trends between different sub-populations. In 2018, NMFS did 83 interventions at HMS camps. These interventions include translocations, disentanglements, release from seawall -10 seals, Tern Island. The year 2018 saw the lowest rate of survival of new pups ever at French Frigate Shoals, 37 of 40 disappeared and 29 known deceased. Archipelago-wide vaccination program initiated in 2016 continues and the program is approaching herd immunity.

HGT Update: Population of nesting females at French Frigate Shoals seems to be growing about 3.2% per year, slowed from the 5-6% growth seen a few years ago. However, only one nesting location is represented in the study underlying this estimate. French Frigate Shoals nesting habitat was reduced in 2018 with the loss of East Island. Luckily, much of the nesting had already occurred when Walaka hit on October 18; however still, about 19% of nests were lost.

NMFS continues to expand HGT research in the NWHI and MHI, documenting individual reproduction, health, nesting habitat (temps,etc.) and other parameters. Individuals are now marked with identifier so the public and volunteers can assist with HGT monitoring. Honu 2019 monitoring campaign engages public to ID and track turtles.

The 2019 HGT camps will deploy May 15, 2019 to French Frigate Shoals and Midway Atoll.

## VIII. ACTION ITEMS

### 1. Access to Monument for management operations and research

The Council created a bulletlist of topics to support access to the Monument.

**RAC Action:** The Council voted unanimously to accept the topics on the bulletlist.

The bulletlist is featured below:

Access to Monument for management operations and research

- Importance of having a vessel
- Continuity of research (grants, possible extensions)
- Cascade effects on data, wide implications
- Not making comments exclusive to PMNM, but other Monuments
- Impacts of ocean change throughout the Pacific
- Include projects that will not be done because of lack of access to vessels
- Financial impact of not having a vessel
- Opening of letter be about the importance of the world's oceans
- Marine debris removal

**RAC Action:** The Council voted unanimously to draft a letter to ONMS Director John Armor supporting ONMS/PMNM access to the Monument for management operations and research. The letter will be written by RAC leadership and focus on the topics on the bulletlist.

#### IX. RAC WORK PLANS

The RAC accepted the RAC/SAC Working Group purpose statement: “The purpose of this joint working group between HIIHWNM Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) and Northwest Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council (RAC) is to find commonality between the two sites and collaborate/coordinate with joint efforts moving forward to support both sites.” The Education and Outreach Working Group discussed their purpose statement and the topics/actions of their Work Plan.

The Work Plan draft is posted on the PMNM/RAC website.

#### X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Shannon Amiot: Ms. Amiot urged the Council to develop a program to educate local fishing ship crew on recycling and reducing waste.

Kitt Langdell: Mr. Langdell thanked the RAC for the opportunity to attend the meeting.

Jacob Roberts: Mr. Roberts thanked the RAC for their work and the opportunity to attend the meeting.

#### XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.