

Sanctuary Advisory Council

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa
Rotunda Room, Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center
1:00-3:00PM

Purpose: To provide updates on the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary management plan review process; Get Into Your Sanctuary Campaign; Catlin Seaview Survey; sanctuary fishing tournament (possible action item); sanctuary research and monitoring; coral bleaching; and crown-of-thorns starfish eradications.

I. **Welcome, Dean Hudson, Council Chair** (Dean was unable to attend, Fa`amao Asalele chaired meeting)

A. Roll Call

SAC members (in attendance)

1. Jim Bacon, National Park American Samoa
2. David Jennings, Community-at-Large: Swains Island
3. Edwin Seui, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
4. Teri Peters, Education
5. Tiara Drabble, Youth Member
6. Fonoti Uluiva Simanu, Aunu`u
7. Kelley Anderson Tagarino, American Samoa Community College
8. Fa`amao Asalele, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (Alternate)
9. Togotogo S.P. Sotoa, Community-at-Large: Manu`a
10. Togiola Tulafono, Community-at-Large: East Tutuila
11. Tom Drabble, Business Industry
12. Peter Crispin, Diving
13. Domingo Ochavillo, Department of Marine & Wildlife Resources (Alternate)
14. Fatima Saua-Leau, NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office
15. Allen Tom, Regional Director, ONMS Pacific Islands Region (called in)

Excused:

16. Sepp Steffany, Fishing
17. Ameko Pato, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency
18. Keniseli Lafaele, American Samoa Government Department of Commerce
19. Ruth Matagi, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources
20. Atapana Fili Ulufale, Community-at-Large: West Tutuila
21. Betty Cavanagh, Tourism
22. Dean Hudson, Ocean Recreation/Ocean-Centered Ecotourism
23. Eric Roberts, US Coast Guard

Absent:

24. Tony Ta`ase: Fishing Seat

Guests:

25. Malia Chow, Superintendent, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Staff:

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26. Gene Brighthouse, Superintendent
27. Atuatasi Lelei Peau, Deputy Superintendent
28. Joe Paulin, Conservation Ecology and Policy Specialist
29. Malie Letuli, Visitor/Volunteer Coordinator
30. Dr. Wendy Cover, Research Coordinator
31. Isabel Gaoteote, Outreach/Communication Coordinator
32. Alma Roe-Cornejo, Administrative/Fiscal Assistant
33. Peter Taliva`a, Sanctuary Liaison-Aunu`u

General Public:

34. Ivona Tuiasosopo Lui

B. Introductions

C. Swearing-In of New Members

Gene Brighthouse: swore-in the following new advisory council members:

1. David Jennings, Community-at-Large: Swains Island.
2. Togotogo S.P. Sotoa, Community-at-Large: Manu`a Islands.
3. Fonoti Uluiva Simanu, Community-at-Large: Aunu`u Islands.
4. Fa`amao Asalele, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (Alternate).
5. Tiara Drabble, Youth Seat.
 - Inductees recited pledge.
 - Gene Brighthouse welcomed them to the sanctuary advisory council.

(Introductions) Acting Chair Fa`amao Asalele requested all to introduce themselves.

D. Review and Approval of August 25, 2014 Meeting Notes

Fa`amao Asalele - requested comments regarding minutes.

- No comments.
- Motion to approve by Peter Crispin.
- 2nd by Teri Peters.
- Approved.

E. Approval of Agenda

Fa`amao Asalele - requested comments/amendments to agenda.

- Motion to approve Agenda by Peter Crispin.
- 2nd Kelley Tagarino.
- Approved.

F. Reminders:

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i. Council Member Recruitment:

Current Recruitment - Research Seat – Ends March 31, 2015.

Gene Brighthouse- requested that members inform the public of the recruitment of the Research Seat.

Next Recruitment – Business/Industry and Community-at-Large: Tutuila (West Side)

Tom Drabble currently holds Business/Industry and Atapana Fili Ulufale holds the Community-at-Large: Tutuila (West Side). Both members are eligible to reapply during the May recruitment.

Business/Industry Recruitment– Begins May 15, 2015

- Council members should encourage those they think would be good candidates.

Community-at-Large: Tutuila (West Side) Recruitment – Begins May 15, 2015

- Council members should encourage those they think would be good candidates to represent this district.

ii. Council Officer Elections

Gene Brighthouse:

- Next council meeting tentatively September 2015.
- Elections will be for the following seats (2 year term):
 1. Chair
 2. Vice-Chair
 3. Secretary

II. Updates:

A. Malia Chow, Superintendent, Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary: Management Plan Review Process: Moving from single species management to an ecosystem-based approach.

- Presentation start: 1:31pm
- End: 1:52pm
- Fa`amao Asalele thanked Malia Chow, asked group if they had any questions.

Togiola Tulafono: I have two questions,

1. How do you propose to fashion regulations?
2. How do you envision enforcement issues that may arise in territory and federal waters?

Malia Chow:

- Regulations will be enforced by Coast Guard and NOAA Office Law Enforcement under the Joint Enforcement Agreement.

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- There is an Enforcement Task Force that meets periodically that will take up this issue.

Togiola Tulafono: Is there a protocol for fines and violations established?

Malia Chow: No, there is not a protocol in place. It has not been worked that out yet. There is a penalty schedule.

David Jennings: What is eco-based management?

Malia Chow:

- More agencies recognize this as a broader approach.
- Rather than focusing on just humpback whales (single species) we want to include all of the natural and cultural resources in an area and manage compatible uses of the ocean.
- We are not proposing to close off any areas or regulating fishing at this time.

Fa`amao Asalele asked if there were any more questions for Malia Chow.

- There were no additional questions from group.
- Fa`amao thanked Malia for her presentation.

B. Gene Brighthouse: "Get Into Your Sanctuary" Campaign and Catlin Seaview Survey

Start: 2:00pm

Gene Brighthouse: introduced the "Get Into Your Sanctuary" Campaign.

Isabel Gaoteote: presented mission, purpose, and calendar of events for the campaign.

GeneBrighthouse: elaborated on the connection with the visitor industry and education outreach.

Tiara Drabble: Is there an age limit?

Isabel Gaoteote: Yes, school ages, elementary and high school.

Togiola Tulafono: Is there a professional marketing strategy or approach?

Gene Brighthouse: The campaign is a national campaign and there are working groups in place.

Togiola Tulafono: Have you considered something specifically targeted for American Samoa?

Gene Brighthouse: Yes, we are currently working with the American Samoa Visitors Bureau for marketing and promotion of Sanctuary sites at their off island trade shows. We welcome ideas for a small working group to assist with this effort.

Peter Crispin: Is there interaction with the American Samoa Visitors Bureau?

Gene Brighthouse:

- Yes, we have had very extensive sessions with the American Samoa Visitors Bureau since January. We have had 3 in-service meetings with them.

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- We have some of the local businesses assist in development of other eco-placed businesses. They are in support and heavily engaged.
- Joe Paulin: This would be a great task for the Tourism and Recreation Working Group. One of the items on the agenda was to revisit and revitalize the group that was established some time ago.
- Gene Brighthouse: There have been a lot of discussions with the SAC representatives and community. We are here to facilitate and assist development of these activities.
- Discussions ended 2:15pm

Gene Brighthouse:

- Provided an update on Catlin Seaview Survey.
- Catlin Seaview Survey came last week due to a NOAA advisory alert regarding the coral bleaching event in American Samoa.
- American Samoa is the first documented severe coral bleaching event this year. A global event is in process.
- Richard Vevers came back with team to document the American Samoa bleaching event. They have produced a documentary prior to this called "*Chasing Ice*." It is about polar ice caps that are melting and the affects.
- Focus areas in American Samoa were Airport Pools and Coconut Point. They have images from December 2014 for comparison of pre and post bleaching events.
- End 2:20pm

Fa'amao Asalele introduced Wendy Cover.

C. Wendy Cover: Sanctuary Research and Monitoring and Coral Bleaching 2015.

Start: 2:20pm

What's happening:

- Division of NOAA Coral Watch provides a cumulative map that has coral bleaching predictions.
- Tutuila – alert level 2 in two weeks.
- Hopefully 3 months from now weather will cool.
- History: 1994 a bleaching event covered almost 50% of coral cover in Tutuila.
- Corals that were on slope took longer to recover.

Kelley Anderson Tagarino- Have you received any feedback from community?

Gene- No not yet.

Wendy Cover- This is very new right now and we have yet to reach the community.

Togiola Tulafono - Is there a phenomenon with the current tides? I have noticed the distinct changes in the tides and when it is low tide the corals are protruding out of the ocean.

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Wendy Cover- That is a good question, tides definitely play a role. Low tides have definitely contributed to some of the death and bleaching. What is concerning is warmer waters.

David Jennings- Are there particular species that are prone and are some sites that are more prone to coral bleaching?

Wendy Cover- Certain areas can be more resistant to disturbances like coral bleaching. That is one of the considerations for creating marine protected areas.

David Jennings -If there are specific species and sites is there a management program to put in place?

Wendy Cover:

- Reduce emissions, but that is a long term effort.
- Other places have closed off areas to tourists to limit/minimize damage.
- Others have tried cooling, and shading areas.
- In the long run we can manage as little pollution to try and keep it resilient and healthy.

End: 2:40pm

Fa`amao Asalele introduced the next presentation.

D. Wendy Cover for Charlene Felkley: Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Eradications 2015.

Start: 2:40pm

- COTS are a natural part of the reef but can be problematic when there are outbreaks.
- COTS respond to nutrient inputs and survive a lot better with higher nutrients in the water.
- Eradication efforts have been ongoing for several years.
- Monitoring, removals, education outreach, media campaigns.
- 2014 Summary of COTS Blitz.
 - 20.6+ miles surveyed.
 - 1,440 COTS eradicated.
 - Covered 13 priority reef areas.
 - Important to ensure COTS are not in priority areas as well as removing those that are.
- 2015 Response team to arrive end of March.
- Additionally, the National Park of American Samoa has 4 divers that are committed to COTS removal on a daily basis and the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources assists with removals when they are able.

Jim Bacon- Do we know the current status of focus areas?

Wendy Cover- We are collaborating with the NOAA Coral Reef Ecosystem Division. They are doing towing surveys and will share the data with the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa to identify target/focus areas for the next removal.

Togiola Tulafono: In regards to the chart from the 2014 removal, the highest removals came from lowly populated areas and the highly populated had the least amount of removals.

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Wendy Cover

- We first saw COTS was in front of Maliu Mai and Taima Bank. Both areas have sewage outfalls.
- We have been trying to focus on key sites that are priority reefs.

Jim Bacon- the National Park of American Samoa is also doing tow board surveys in the Fagamalo area.

Kelley Anderson Tagarino- To help clarify density, COTS eat healthy coral and healthy coral are in less populated areas.

E. Peter Crispin and Joe Paulin: Sanctuary Photo-Fishing Tournament 2015.

Start: 2:54

Joe Paulin:

- Brief on Sanctuary Classic.
- Photo-fishing tournament for students.
- Purpose is to encourage ocean recreation in the sanctuary and raise awareness about fishing methods that are allowed in sanctuary areas.
- Sanctuary Classic will be held at Fagatele Bay, Aunu`u, Fagalua/Fogama`a, and Ta`u.
- Due to remoteness Muliāva and Swains will not be included this year.
- Fagatele Bay will participate but only photos may be taken as it is a no-take-area.
- Photos will be uploaded to Facebook for voting.

Joe Paulin:

- Peter would you like to add?
- Questions anyone?

Peter Crispin- I would like to add that we are still looking for sponsors. We are looking forward to getting the young ones in the water and appreciating our sanctuaries.

Joe Paulin- Please let us know if you have any potential sponsors. Thank you.

III. Public Comment

Ivona Tuiasosopo Lui –

- I grew up in Nu`uuli and wanted to support this effort.
- I am active in wetland conservation.

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- I am trying to preserve the fish in my area and constantly trying to educate others on symbiotic relationships.
- We need to save the species to go back and feed the coral.

Fa`amao Asalele - Thank you Ivona.

- She is very active in the community and has adopted a stream with the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency program and I am pleased to hear she has adopted a wetland area as well.

IV. New Business

A. Form an Education Working Group

Joe Paulin:

- One of the next tasks is assisting sanctuary staff in adapting the Navigating Change Curriculum.
- This has been implemented in Hawai'i and we would like to adapt this for American Samoa.
- Would anyone be interested in participating in this group?
- Teri Peters (as the Education representative) will chair this working group

Kelley Anderson Tagarino- What grade level does this program target?

Isabel Gaoteote- High school students.

B. Discuss the Purpose of Conservation Science Working Group

Joe Paulin- The Science Plan has been drafted and submitted to Head Quarters for review. Following the HQ review, the working group will review and provide input on the draft science plan.

C. Discuss the Purpose of Tourism Working Group

Joe Paulin- We would like to revitalize the working group to have participants share their experience and expertise to advise and assist in marketing of the sanctuary and village-based Eco-based businesses and "Get Into Your Sanctuary!" Campaign.

David Jennings- I would like to join working group.

Tom Drabble- I will participate but does not want to be chair.

Peter Crispin- I can join later in the year, after September.

Fa`amao Asalele- Any additions to agenda?

V. Concluding Remarks

Gene Brighthouse:

- Thanked Fa`amao Asalele for chairing the meeting on such short notice.
- Announced Jim Bacon's departure and thanked him for his continuous support and service and his commitment.

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Jim Bacon- thank you.

Adjourned: 3:12pm

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