



Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Management Plan Review Process

Located in American Samoa, Fagatele Bay is the only National Marine Sanctuary in the Southern Hemisphere. Covering $\frac{1}{4}$ square mile, it is the smallest and most remote of the National Marine Sanctuaries.

Management Plan Review Process & Future Activities

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary has a sanctuary management plan document that describes the objectives, policies, and activities for this site. Management plans generally outline regulatory goals, describe boundaries, and identify staffing and budget needs, set priorities and performance measures for resource protection, research, and education programs. They also guide the development of future management activities. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) is required by law to periodically review sanctuary management plans to ensure that sanctuary sites continue to best conserve, protect, and enhance their nationally significant living and cultural resources. Fagatele's Management Plan dates back to the original designation date and has not been updated. Therefore, recent scientific discoveries, advancements in managing marine resources and new resource management issues are not addressed in the existing plan.

What are the steps for the review?

The ONMS periodically reviews sanctuary management plans, relying on public input from both local and national communities. This process for FBNMS began with the release of a "State of the Sanctuary" report that provides information to the public about the sanctuary, its accomplishments, and current resource management issues. This report was completed in 2006 and is available on our website or from the sanctuary office. Sanctuary Program staff and the Advisory Council will hold public scoping meetings to gather input on management of Fagatele Bay and possibly adding additional sanctuary sites, including the marine portions of the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. They will then develop action plans to address these issues and prepare a draft management plan. Public meetings will then be held on the draft plan. This additional public input will help staff revise the document into a final



management plan which, once approved, will outline the sanctuaries' priorities for the next 5-10 years.

Scoping Meetings: Sanctuary staff will hold public scoping meetings in communities adjacent to the sanctuary in February, 2009. The meetings will allow sanctuary users, members of the public, and agencies to comment on current sanctuary management strategies and provide input on what issues and problems they see as management priorities for the next 5 to 10 years. At this time, Sanctuary staff will also obtain feedback on possible areas for site expansion, offering sanctuary protection to potential additional sites in the Territory. Comments may also be sent to the ONMS through the website or in writing. The final date, time, and location of scoping meetings will be posted on the website and bulletin boards of most media outlets on island.

Action Plans: After the scoping meetings, sanctuary staff will review all comments and work with the Sanctuary Advisory Council and the public to prioritize issues for the management plan review. If necessary, additional workshops will be scheduled to help sanctuary staff develop tailored action plans that address priority issues. These action plans will form the foundation of the draft management plan.

Draft & Final Management Plans: The revised draft management plans will contain a series of action plans that address resource protection and general management. They may also





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propose regulatory changes. The sanctuaries will take written comments and host a series of public meetings on the draft plans. A supporting environmental document, such as an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement, will be prepared to support and explain any changes. After the close of the public comment period, the ONMS will review comments and make necessary changes before issuing final management plans.

What kind of changes can I expect?

Management plan review provides an opportunity for sanctuary staff and the public to shape the future direction and management of the sanctuary and potential addition of other sites. During the management plan review, the site will be evaluated and possibly revise operations and management framework; resource protection, education, and research programs; site-specific regulations; boundaries; and management zones. The sites will also evaluate the need to improve coordination and reduce duplication among the sites.

How will the public be involved?

Active and informed public participation is a key element of sanctuary management, particularly during management plan review. The ONMS recognizes the public as a key resource management partner and values their input in helping shape and manage marine sanctuaries. For almost 30 years, the ONMS has engaged the public in helping create new sanctuaries, develop resource protection strategies, resolve multi-stakeholder issues (i.e., water quality, vessel traffic, and marine reserves), and more recently to review existing management plans. Using the lessons learned from these experiences, the ONMS will help build community awareness of key issues affecting these sanctuaries and actively engage user and interest groups, agencies, and the public in an open dialogue about how to best shape the future direction and management for American Samoa. The public will have numerous opportunities to participate in management plan review, beginning with the scoping meetings and continuing through the development of the draft and final management plans. The ONMS will provide ample notice of each meeting through local media and the website.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please visit our website at: <http://fagatelebay.noaa.gov/> or contact your local sanctuary office at:

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NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARIES

January 2009

