

BENJAMIN J. CAYETANO  
GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
P.O. Box 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**GILBERT S. COLOMA-AGARAN**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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STATE PARKS

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Dr. Tom Kitsos  
Executive Director  
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy  
1120 20<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 200 North  
Washington, DC 20026

Dear Dr. Kitsos:

Thank you for your recent request for additional information from the State of Hawaii on how we manage different uses within our Marine Protected Areas and impacts done by tourism to ocean resources, particularly damage done by anchors to coral reefs.

I have asked my staff to prepare an outline of management actions that are undertaken within our Marine Protected Areas to manage different uses. You will note from this list that there are numerous actions employed and the decisions of which actions to apply depends on the location and types of allowed uses within each of the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Hawaii has 10 Marine Life Conservation Districts, numerous Fisheries Management Areas, a cultural protected site the Kahoolawe Island Reserve, and a Natural Area Reserve. These sites are located throughout the State and access to each varies greatly. The outline summarizes the approaches used collectively at all sites. It should also be noted that many of the management approaches listed are also employed outside of our MPAs.

Major portions of the nearshore waters in areas adjacent to tourism destinations, or areas of high urban density are also designated as Ocean Recreation Management Areas (ORMAs). Within these areas, certain types of activities are controlled and may not occur except in specifically designated sites. Often the amount of and type of vessels used are also limited. In these designated ocean recreation management areas, personal watercraft, commercial high-speed vessels and parasailing are regulated. Additional restrictions may be placed on these activities in the winter months due to the potential impacts to the Humpback Whales in locations that are known to have high whale population densities. In some cases, for example with the commercial jet ski operations, the operators may only operate in the non-whale season. In other cases, the

areas of operation are further restricted. With the increased interest in the use of kayaks, especially as tours or as rentals, Hawaii is working with the industry to regulate this activity in areas where the densities of kayak rentals may reach over 50 kayaks in a site in one day. Other creative solutions have been developed for competing activities such as surfers and windsurfers in the same site that are based on wind velocities.

The list outlined below and the additional explanations provided above are not an exhaustive list, but does provide you with numerous management strategies. As technology is always advancing, and new types of ocean recreation equipment are likely to be introduced, the challenge is to work with the users and the industry to create workable solutions to user conflicts before they become a problem. This is often easier said than done, but continues to be a goal.

Hawaii currently has over 160 day-use moorings installed statewide. Plans and permits are being developed for an additional 300+. The State received preliminary approval to install over 300 moorings statewide in 1995 from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). This general permit expired in June 2000 at which time a request for renewal of the previous permit with additional sites added was submitted to the ACOE. In May 2002, the Army Corps notified the State that it would continue to provide permits for those sites previously approved, however new sites would have to go through a complete permit review and approval process. No moorings were installed during the 2 years that we needed to wait to receive approval from the ACOE.

Plans are underway to install moorings at some of the most heavily used and most frequently requested sites by this fall, in sites which were previously approved. Additionally, the State is working with a non-profit organization (Malama Kai Foundation) and has submitted a grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to hire a .5 FTE coordinator to move this program along. Malama Kai, recently received word that this grant has been approved. All this ensures a more timely approach to getting those moorings that were previously approved installed.

However, with 410,000 acres of coral reef in the main Hawaiian islands, it will not be possible to eliminate all anchoring on coral reefs. Maintaining the day-use moorings once they are installed will also be a challenge. The process to determine the best sites to put the day-use moorings was significant and included input from all dive/snorkel operators and fishermen who were interested in seeing these moorings installed. To date, this program has been well supported by industry as a partnership. Industry and non-governmental organizations have assisted in all aspects from raising funds for the supplies, to donations of boats and crew to assist in installations, to providing input on site selections, etc.

Below please find the outline of management strategies employed in our MPAs:

### **Management Strategies Employed In Hawaii's MPAs**

### **Regulate activities**

- a. Set aside no anchoring zones and establish a system of moorings
- b. Issue permits to all commercial operations (including companies renting vessels to individuals)
- c. Designate some sites as no access for any vessels
- d. Define allowable activities and establish overarching regulation that states that activities are not allowed unless they are specified
- e. Restrict fish feeding

### **Limit access**

- a. Regulate parking (when stalls are all full, no cars allowed in)
- b. Install a limited number of moorings and designate the site as a no anchoring zone
- c. Charge user fees
- d. Determine appropriate commercial activities for a sites and establish specified days and times for these regulated activities
- e. Limit or restrict the access to an area by tour busses or vans

### **Disperse use**

- a. Establish additional sites
- b. Work with the visitor industry to market other options

### **Rotate opening and closing to visitors**

- a. Close to all users one day/week
- b. Open and close area to all users for annual cycles
- c. Rotate the use of moorings

### **Develop Viable Education and Interpretive Training Programs**

- a. Require all first time visitors to a site to go through a visitor orientation
- b. Establish interpretive programs and work with the commercial operators to train their guides
- c. Develop volunteer interpretive programs at popular sites

### **Actions that Make it Work**

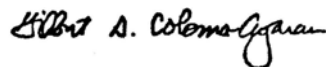
- ◆ Set a value on commercial permits that ensures they are highly prized and which results in majority compliance
- ◆ Provide training and interpretive materials to promote conservation practices and ensure that commercial operators understand the value of a healthy resource
- ◆ Provide opportunities to engage in community-based management, which provides significant support

- ◆ Design and set aside a sacrificial reef area in high use sites to maintain the health of the majority of the ecosystem. This can be done in the form of an underwater trail or setting aside specific entry and exit points where the bulk of the activities will occur. Concentrating use to a particular site ensures that the majority of the resource remains unimpacted.

### **Additional Policy Recommendations**

- ◆ Review policies for establishing protected areas and set up a strategic plan to determine appropriate levels and types of use for each area
- ◆ Involve users and communities in the management decisions
- ◆ Close loopholes in laws where possible
- ◆ Recognize that regardless of the initial justification for the establishment of the MPA, in areas where tourism is the engine that drives the economy, the MPAs will become a defacto tourism destination and will need to be managed as such.

Very truly yours,



Gilbert S. Coloma-Agaran  
Chairperson