

Meeting Summary
U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
November 5 – 7, 2005
Republic of Palau

Meeting and Decision Highlights, Presentations, and other supplementary meeting material are available on the Task Force website (www.coralreef.gov). For more information contact Beth Dieveney (beth.dieveney@noaa.gov; 301-713-2989 x 200) or Roger Griffis (roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov; 301-713-2989 x 115).

Welcome & Introductions

Paramount High Chief (ret. Marine) Reklai Rafael Ngirmang

Full Remarks available at www.coralreef.gov

H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.

Full Remarks available at www.coralreef.gov

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force presented the Republic of Palau and H.E. Tommy E. Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic with an award for outstanding leadership in conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. In thanks for hosting the Task Force, the President was presented with a gift, satellite imagery of the main island cluster of the Republic of Palau.

Department of Interior Task Force Co-Chair Remarks:

David Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks was present representing Judge Craig Manson.

Judge Manson is disappointed that he could not attend but looks forward to hearing the outcomes and successes of the meeting. Thank you to Palau for your hospitality and generosity.

Recognizes and acknowledges David Cohen, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Insular Affairs as this is his first Task Force meeting.

Task Force Member introductions

- Karen Wardzinski – Department of Justice
- Bob Ballard – State of Florida
- Penny Cutt – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Merlyn Carlson – U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Bill Rohring – Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Paula Bontempi – National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- David Cohen – U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs
- Felix Camacho – Territory of Guam
- Redley Killion – Federated States of Micronesia

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- David Smith – Department of the Interior
- Tim Keeney – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Fabian Iyar – Republic of Palau
- Witten T. Phillipo – Republic of the Marshall Islands

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- Tagiola Tulafono – Territory of American Samoa
- Aida Rosario – Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
- Stephanie Burkhart – U.S. Coast Guard
- Christine Dawson – U.S. Department of State
- Don Schregardus – Department of Defense, Department of the Navy
- Peter Young – State of Hawaii
- Fran Castro – Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- Wayne Natri – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Barbara Best – U.S. Agency for International Development

Opening Panel: Conserving Coral Reef Ecosystems in Micronesia: Issues & Opportunities

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The first panel celebrated marine conservation strategies in the Pacific and Micronesian region, where conservation management methods are neither traditional nor purely Western and management issues are complex and further complicated by changing values and political systems. This panel highlighted the issues and opportunities for marine conservation in Micronesia some of which can be creatively applied in other jurisdictions and coral reef ecosystems.

- **Modern Marine Conservation in Palau, 1981 – 2005: Lessons from 20 Years of Evolution**
Noah Idechong – Palau National Congress
- **Upon a Stone Alter, We Build this Sacred Land: Pohnpei**
Willy Kostka – Conservation Society of Pohnpei
- **Marine Stewardship in Yap: Adding Modern Elements to a Traditional Framework**
Charles Chieng – Yap Community Action Program
- **Live Reef Fish Trades in the Pacific: Impacts, Issues, and Needs**
Being Yeeting – Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Report from the All Islands Committee

Lelei Peau – American Samoa

Local Action Strategies (LAS)

- All jurisdictions have begun development and implementation of LAS. Very real success stories forthcoming.

All Islands Committee Retreat

- Retreat provided an opportunity to review best efforts and refine goals and objectives for next 6 years, identifying mechanisms to work more effectively. Invited Florida and the Freely Associated States to become members as a commitment to deepen collaboration. Have improved partnerships with federal agencies of and through the Task Force, will extend this success and approach to the FAS, look forward to finding new ways to support their efforts and strengthen collective voice and efforts.
- Increased efforts to document collective successes through the development of a new 5 yr strategy. By end of this year, hope to adopt 1-year interim short term strategy (CY 2006), followed by a new 5-year strategy for all jurisdictions. This will include at least 6 regional projects.
- Adopted new communications protocol, which will help improve effective and efficient use of time and resources, enable jurisdictions to more quickly respond to needs of

federal partners, documenting successes, providing forums to share information. Plan to focus communications increasingly through the Secretariat.

- Plan to develop an All Islands website which will provide background information on the Committee, each jurisdiction's committees and LAS projects, and linkages to jurisdiction websites, CRTF websites, etc. Expect to complete the website by the next CRTF meeting.

Topics of Concern

- Worst-ever bleaching in US waters currently underway in the Caribbean. Committee calls for final approval of the 'Managers Guide to Bleaching' as a key tool for helping jurisdictions address bleaching.
- Thanks to Bill Rohring, Hazel Grozman, and others have been working to address the difficulty the jurisdictions are having in implementing the Water Quality resolutions. This difficulty underscores the importance of such a resolution.
- Thanks for improving the process for Sunia Scholar Awards. FAS are now eligible.
- Express gratitude to agencies that have gone out of their way to address human capacity needs. Capacity for grant and program management is a priority.
- Thanks to NOAA for recent Pacific Islands Education Consortium Program (PIEPC) grant. Request that other agencies look for creative mechanisms to find resources to help address human resource capacity. Education and community involvement in marine science and coral protection is of enormous benefit to the jurisdictions.
- Thanks to Secretariat Mike Hamm for efforts and vision. Mike is retiring.

Report from State & Territory Members: Accomplishments, Challenges, Needs

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands

Fran Castro – Office of the Governor

CNMI Coral Reef Management Program is supported by three agencies that work together to implement LAS efforts. Exemplary efforts follow:

- *Talakhaya Revegetation, Rota*: three year project aims to revegetate area with fire tolerant plants to prevent erosion (wildfires are intentionally set by deer hunters). Project includes related outreach efforts and community involvement. Partnerships include boy scouts, local agencies, and school groups.
- *In-Shore Creel Surveys*: Started with support from Coral Management Grants. Project includes staff training, five months of data collection, and plans to refine surveys.
- *Education and Outreach*: Participated in MARAMP cruise with educator aboard. Created a website where schools could track progress of monitoring cruise.

Tim Lange – CRMO

- *Laulau Watershed* – priority LAS project that links science and management in watershed management, includes partnerships with territory and federal agencies, NGOs, volunteers, outreach and education component. Develop into a model for future management projects.
- *Laulau*: coral reef, turtle nesting, important for pre-historical value, tourist destination. Threats include erosion due to dirt and gravel access roads. No proper drainage structures. Erosion in upland areas, streambed erosion. All leads to consistent dumping of sediment into Bay, leads to turf algal blooms. Lot of driving on the beach which destroys turtle nesting habitat.
- To solve problems in reef, need to solve problems in upper watershed. Project activities include: (1) Door to door campaign to households describing work and

invitation to participate in volunteer activities, including (2) stream mapping and monitoring, (3) upper watershed revegetation with 200 volunteers (planting plan for 400 trees, nursery expansion, private donations, landowner agreement, community volunteers). (4) develop engineering designs for erosion controls and beach access improvements.

- 5-Phased approach from 2004 through 2006: NOAA grant supporting revegetation, also CNMI funds, *phases 3, 4, 5 not currently funded. Once completed, will have addressed ALL erosion sources and will have completed revegetation. Appreciate any help in identifying funding sources.*

State of Hawaii

Peter Young – Department of Land and Natural Resources

- Highlight since last CRTF meeting is the recent ruling by Governor Linda Lingle declaring state waters in the Northwest Hawaiian Island (NWHI) off limits to fishing and recreation, the result of three years of public input. Signing ceremony will celebrate historical efforts.
- HI encourages federal agencies to follow suit in eliminating fishing in federal waters. Expresses support for NWHI co-managed sanctuary, much success with co-management in Humpback Whale NMS and NWHI CRER. The NWHI is a very special place with little direct human impacts, as there is very little use of the area making it possible to phase out the few fishermen in the area.
- Hawaii will be resuming efforts to obtain World Heritage Site status (natural and cultural site) for the NWHI – thanks to Hawaii Audubon Society for taking the lead. If designated, the NWHI would join 800 sites around the world, only 20 of which are in the U.S.
- DLNR has adopted a definition of Marine Protected Area (MPA) through an executive order.

Local Action Strategies

- Land Based Sources of Pollution LAS: conference on Maui well received, CRCP has helped fund this workshop and LAS.
- Starting Recreational Overuse LAS, starting to work with recreational tourism providers.
- Outreach LAS: Recently hosted Awards Ceremony for Living Reef Program. 250 attended, recognized good work of non-profits, business (commercial operators), and individuals in protecting reefs. Makai Watch using volunteers to help with enforcement of coral reef resources, through partnership with Community Conservation Network and The Nature Conservancy is now expanding across state.

Territory of American Samoa

Governor Tagiola Tulafono

- Expresses gratitude for the Pacific Islands Education Consortium Partnership grant extending opportunities to Pacific Islanders in the marine sciences. Support of regional academic institutions shows understanding and recognition of Pacific needs.
- American Samoa will continue to serve as Chair of All Islands Committee.

Key issues and Local Action Strategy Efforts

- Climate Change LAS: Sept workshop for AS government agencies and local economic development interests to discuss impact of climate change and El Nino on businesses and communities, developed greater appreciation of potential impact on infrastructure like coral reefs, impact of rising sea levels and CO₂, and possibility of prolonged droughts. Established a Territory-wide committee to develop action and risk management plan for climate change.

- Capacity building: Continue with efforts to establish a marine research laboratory to fill important knowledge gaps and build local research and management capacity. Next year will develop a long-term plan for research and management through lab.
 - *Continue to look for partnerships and funding.*
- Monitoring: first year of monitoring completed showing high diversity of fish and corals and establishing a baseline of information. Will continue monitoring over next few years to determine coral reef health.
- Priority to increase efforts to protect coral reefs from Land Based Sources of Pollution, recreational use, and other LAS threat areas.
- Population has increased 20% over 10 years (1200 new immigrants each year). Task Force may shy away from population control issues, but American Samoa remains dedicated because overpopulation will be a key – possibly the key issue – for coral reef conservation as it will worsen other threats through increased use and impact on reefs. Population averages 700+ per square mile versus 79 per square mile in the continental U.S. with arable land in American Samoa covering only 10% compared to 19% in the U.S.; 10 times population density and ½ agricultural capacity in AS demonstrates magnitude of the problem.
 - Issue will not go away until we find ways to address directly, need to expand our national thinking to include the reality of this problem for SIDS. Overpopulation is a major gap and the root cause of many other coral reef threats. Need to stimulate forward progress despite lack of funding.
- Damage assessment and restoration after natural disasters. Requested ESF11 assistance from FEMA, but did not receive favorable response. Fed agencies should address desired emergency management function of FEMA and ESF11.
 - Recommend that CRTF review the situation to help AS respond to natural disaster. Hopes that Katrina response in Gulf will help provide resolution to impact of ESF11.

Territory of Guam

Governor Felix Camacho

- Opens with traditional story about boy in canoe who violates traditional resource use practices. His uncle explains that there are two wolves inside each of us, one good and one not so good, and which wolf wins in influencing each person depends on which wolf you feed. Islands are faced with this challenge between development and environmental protection.
- Regional efforts critical and looks forward to bringing FAS to the table.
- Balancing economy, culture and environment: Enjoying period of new focus on marine conservation.

Key successes, challenges and needs:

- Coral Reef Economic Valuation – helping to bring new business partners to the table, to better understand their role in successful tourism and healthy future for coral reefs.
- Outreach and Education – work to educate visitors and the community about Guam’s biodiversity and their impact on the environment, Must use outreach and education to ensure that recreational users do not negate the sacrifices of fishermen. Outreach and education increasingly focused on watershed issues, land use, and recreational use.
 - Island Pride Campaign, children’s program “Jungle Rules,” building
- Marine Preserves – now recognized as tourism destinations and source of economic security. Ongoing studies to understand carrying capacity of reserves and how to balance economic use and conservation. Majority of people found to support Guam MPAs

- Recent problem: scuba fishermen have wiped out schools of fish. But fishermen claim that this is their livelihood and lack other options. Challenge to hold onto subsistence but with a population of 160K, difficult to maintain resources through continued living off land.
- Land Based Sources of Pollution – continues to be a major threat. Solutions include new stormwater management designs and executive order to improve management techniques, Ordot Dump closure, and wastewater system improvements.
 - *Calls on federal and regional partnerships to address challenge of Water Quality resolutions.*
 - *Pleased at Navy's efforts to better address community needs and environmental concerns in two upcoming Department of Defense projects. Recognize importance of dredging and strongly support nation and armed forces, but they call on Navy to complete a full study of impact of loss on Guam's ecosystems and people... losses that may never be restored.*

Tribute to Mike Hamm for serving as the All Islands Committee Secretariat.

Republic of Palau

Adalbert Eledui – Director, Dept of Conservation and Law Enforcement, Koror State

- Palau is a new and small nation facing economic and social development, natural environment will be lost due to increased development. *Need partnerships to help mitigate impact and protect environment.*
- Palau has put aside 23 protected areas in a system representing significant habitat. Vision: To maintain way of life, cultural values, subsistence practices, while preserving resources for the future.

Noah Idechong provided 20 year history of Palau's resource management efforts.

Key issues

- Solid waste – import products that are not biodegradable, working with EPA and others to develop solid waste management programs with a pilot program in Koror State.
- Illegal/over-fishing – Illegal harvest from subsistence fishing pressures, scuba fishing and related decimation and health problems. Government order to protect species of fish, some species regulated by season and site, some cannot leave Palau as food or hobby.
- Protected Area Network – requires \$2.5 million in total costs for existing sites, potential expansion, and two other categories of funding use. Looking for new revenue sources: endowment (\$12M), through international assistance.
- Seek Task Force assistance and other international partners in protecting Palau's coral reefs, cannot do it alone.

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Yumi Crisostomo – Office of Environmental Planning, Protection, & Coordination

Accomplishments

- Formation of coastal and marine management committee.
- Surveys of fish and corals, in partnership with locals and international organizations (NRAS 2004 Namu Expedition) – DOI serves as a key partner
- Certificate program in College of Marshall Islands Marine Science Program: Education, Research, Conservation, outreach/demonstrations, capacity building. Trains students through hands-on experience with marine science and management, offers internships.
- Long-term monitoring: some sites installed, more work to be done.
- Formulation of community-based fisheries management plans based on the needs of local communities.
- Trying to incorporate mariculture practices, including marine ornamentals, into MPA design and management.

Challenges

- Waste management
- Overfishing
- Land rights issues
- Enforcement against illegal foreign fishing fleets – limited capacity and effectiveness given spread of islands
- Sustainable development issues
- Tourism: promote tourism, balance with preservation
- Climate change
- Coral disease
- Coral bleaching
- Crown of thorns invasions

Future Plans

- Fishery Management Plan for each atoll (30+) – to include conservation, recommendations for MPAs, larval dispersal research, among others
- Tourism and self-financed parks
- Conservation for preservation of areas of exceptional beauty and biodiversity

Needs

- Financial help for: training, surveys and monitoring, enforcement, public awareness technical support, among others.

Federated States of Micronesia

Vice President Redley Killion

- National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan: Identifies 86 sites of important biodiversity, establishes a need for national marine protected areas network
- Recognizes importance of local knowledge and methods
- Ecosystem management: Action Plan calls for full assessment of marine, freshwater and estuarine ecosystems to be preserved and managed, including some areas for total protection
- Pohnpei is farthest along in establishing MPAs with existing sites in place, Yap is working on two reserves, Chuuk just established and is partnering with an NGO to establish MPAs.
- Established nation's first marine preserve called, Yupa

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Aida Rosario, Department of Natural and Environmental Resources

Expresses gratitude to government of Palau, realization of how much has been lost in Caribbean.

Local Action Strategy

- Much progress on LAS, finalized this year the LAS document including sections on the Land Based Sources of Pollution, Recreational Overuse, Lack of Awareness and Overfishing.
- Still working to identify sources of funding. DOI – USFWS, NOAA, USDA –NRCS, and EPA organized workshop on federal funding sources.
- Main objective of Overfishing has been completed with Sea Grant, NOAA, and many other partners. Community fisheries outreach including community meetings led by NOAA SERO, participation was excellent, and good discussions about how they can continue to support themselves within conservation management regulations.
- Fishery Advisory Board, which advises the Secretary on fisheries public policy expanded to include greater representation from fishing community, NGOs, academic community and others. Secretary of DNER has been actively participating in board meetings.

- CRCA of 1999 completed, public comments on new draft regulations solicited, expect finalization of regulation in coming year.
- Reserves: Model Jobos Bay Natural Estuarine Research Reserve for other areas in watershed management and protected area management. University of Puerto Rico will manage through contract with DNER. Inventory of pollution sources, underground water sources. Sampling and analysis of groundwater that impacts coral reef areas.
- Demonstration of construction practice impacts
- Project to identify pollution from landfills. Analysis carried out with GIS and remote sensing. First phase of study completed, next phase for 2006.
- Series of workshops and trainings on GIS and ArcView, ArcInfo, ArcGIS.
- Recreational Overuse: proposals solicited through RFP, selected proposals will study impact of mechanical damage in Cordillera Reserve.
- Economic Valuation of coral reefs: Juan Agar from NMFS. Scope of work meeting with good participation of people from 4 different areas (San Juan, Vieques, Culebra and Fallarto).
- Management Plan progress in MPAs: First draft of Culebra Management Plan. Includes existing data, plan of action. Working on management plans for two other areas that are partially completed: Tres Palmas and 1 other. Development of three more MPAs is underway (Mona Island, Humacao, Vieques).
 - DNER has agreed through partnership with NOAA to address need for management plans for all MPAs. Created list of priority sites for management plan development over the next five years.
- Mass bleaching event: are documenting severe mortality of hard corals and other species. Combined pressure from exposure to prolonged calm seas and increased temperatures. Need funds for rapid response to document event and investigate impact on coastal communities. Providing logistical support to scientists on the west coast of PR.

State of Florida

Chantal Collier – Florida Department of Environmental Protection FDEP POC

Accomplishments

- Oceans and Coastal Resources Management Act
Passed by Florida legislature this year, improve linkages between science and management. Mandated creation of Florida Oceans and Coastal Resources Council
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Five U.S. states bordering Gulf and soon be joined by states in Mexico
Five priority areas: nutrient loading, water quality, restoring coastal wetlands, identify habitats to inform management decisions, outreach and education
- Marine Protected Areas
Dry Tortugas National Park Management Agreement
 - Approved by Governor and Florida Cabinet
 - Designated as Natural/Cultural Zone
 - Research Natural Area zone reserved for non-extractive recreation, research, and education activities
- Biscayne, FKNMS and XX looking at updating management plans
- Florida Reef Resilience Program
 - Built upon MOA with GBRMPA signed at Dec '04 Task Force meeting
 - TNC, NOAA, GBRMPA and State of Florida are partners, led by TNC.
 - Collaborative effort to improve understanding of factors that influence longer-term resilience of Florida's reefs
 - Initial focus on creating a spatial framework and in-water response plan to bleaching events

Local Action Strategies (SEFCRI needs)

- Land Based Sources of Pollution, Fishing diving and other uses, Awareness and Appreciation, Maritime Industry Coastal Construction Impacts
- 140 projects, have addressed 42 in year 1, proposed additional 80-some in years 3-5 (ambitious FL LAS will require an additional 2-3 years to address in coordinated and strategic way) *15 projects still need support*

Highlights

- Completed year three of SECREMP monitoring
- Completed benthic maps for Broward Co and initiated Palm Beach mapping.
- Increased tech capacity to support LAS implementation. Support from NOAA. Hired 3 new staff dedicated to implementation of LAS.
- Will be conducting a needs assessment for education and outreach to developing targeted outreach tools.
- Conducted pilot coral biomarker study to ID links between LBSP and reefs
- Initiated development of rapid response and restoration guidelines for coral reef injuries in SE Florida. Sept workshop rescheduled due to Katrina will take place Feb 2-3 in SE Florida to develop guidelines to publish in handbook.

LAS Needs:

- Monitoring: Funding for long-term, region-wide WQ monitoring program across 4 counties
- Mapping: Map benthic habitats in Martin and Miami-Dade Counties
- Research: ID sources, sinks, amts of pollution

Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands*Bill Rohring – Coastal Zone Management Program*

Summary of federal assistance

- Enforcement workshop conducted by DOJ and NOAA, other agencies. Valuable advice
- Federal grants training by DOI, NOAA, USDA, EPA.
- Monitoring by NOAA with opportunities for local school students related to monitoring cruise
- Education and Outreach Workshop
- Region-wide MPA effectiveness workshop. Follow-up will be essential, look forward to continued partnerships.

Local Action Strategies

Efforts initially focused on East End Marine Park.

- St Croix East End Marine Park (STXEEMP): Guide for Managing Submerged Lands in the USVI
- 40 year vision and three years of collaboration, first component in a regional protected area system.
- Multi-use park: four proposed management zones – no take, recreation, turtle wildlife area, open fishing area
- STXEEMP as Management Tool – CZM has not historically been involved in legislation and regulation. Legislation and regulation, management monitoring and research, education and outreach

LAS project implementation:

- LBSP: Mileage of unpaved roads in adjacent watersheds, Construction trends, Pollutant analysis from cores, Mapping – incorporate all data into GIS system
- Lack of Awareness – major success because had dedicated staff (Fellow) to address this area. Planned for a year, then received funds to implement and hit the ground running:
 - Pilot snorkeling program
 - VINE

- Coral Reefs Gap Assessment
- Mobile Kiosk
- Mobile Learning Lab

Requests:

- Need Bleaching Guide for Managers to be release – Currently experiencing worst bleaching event in recorded history in Caribbean – estimating 50-90% mortality in some areas, in USVI may be closer to 90%. May impact listing of Acropora on ESA from endangered to extinct.
- CRTF should issue a call to state concern about bleaching and need for localizing resources to address.
- GIS – NASA is looking into ways to support, NOAA already supporting, USDA and EPA starting to look for ways

TASK FORCE RESPONSE:

Will investigate status and possible release of report, 'Mangers Guide to Bleaching' and asks Steering Committee to draft a statement of concern for current coral bleaching event in Caribbean and include language on monitoring requirements and gaps.

Asks Steering Committee to draft statement of continued support for LAS, which calls for full Progress Report on implementation at the next meeting of the Task Force..

Public Comment (comments and presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The Public Comment period allows the Task Force to hear about various coral reef concerns, ideas, and program goals and successes. We promote open information sharing, and invite the public to call upon Task Force members to review, research, and, if needed, act upon an issue of concern. At this meeting, there were two public comments submitted in writing prior to the meeting and oral comment given by eleven members of the public. Full remarks are provided where available. A brief overview of oral comments is below.

Written Comments Submitted

Stephanie and Dan Clark – Cry of the Water

Dick Dodge – National Coral Reef Institute

Oral Comments Presented

Dominique Bernazken – South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) – two major activities: coastal and marine program; international program (coastal fisheries and waste management); fosters greater collaboration with U.S. agencies; thanks to the Task Force for inviting comment and participation.

Dave Raney – Reef Check/Sierra Club – Alii; here for dive trip in '78 and was impressed by strict regs for reefs at that time; NGOs are essential to local outreach efforts; report on NGO activities across the Pacific available in the exhibit area; will be spending time in Yap and Kosrae; in HI we were pleased about the governor's announcements to protect the state waters in the NWHI; thanks Peter Young and staff for their hard work in persuading the governor to take this visionary action; we're at a critical juncture for NOAA's mgmt development for the NWHI CRER; recommends selection of the preferred alternative to match the state's regulations for the NWHI; urges the CRTF to endorse this strong support; it's a unique opportunity to do the right thing at the right time; also designation of the NWHI as a world heritage site.

Tova Bornovski – Micronesia Shark Foundation – shark research focusing on migration, what are the impacts of divers on shark habits; collaboration with dive industry in Palau; future plans to continue research and share the data; extend regional survey; study DNA resemblance with other neighboring islands; secure funds to continue the research and surveys

Phil Lobel – Boston University, Marine Biological Laboratory – Movement patterns of grey reef shark at Blue Corner, Palau; tracking using acoustic tags; variety of acoustic monitoring sites that records everytime a shark passes by; collaboration with Nat'l Geo using a crittercam (2 hour data recorder before it pops off); what is their response when divers are present; study shows sharks stay in a recorder area up to 70 hours continuously in some cases; where do they go when they're not there? PCBs in shark tissues? Ongoing research.

Tiare Holm – Palau Conservation Society – supports biodiversity and conservation goals; local, regional and int'l partners; face a broad range of challenges; great opportunities to effectively deal with these challenges; strength, wisdom and unity of our community are our biggest asset; 20% of our total reef, mangrove, and lagoon areas currently protected in Palau; commitment continues as they strive for 30% protection (and 20% of forests); several specific examples of local communities; thank friends at NOAA, DOI, NRCS, NFWF, for making some of our programs possible.

Wayne Andrew – Helen Reef Resource Mgmt Project – remote and very diverse; nesting site for sea birds also; experienced overexploitation in the past (destructive methods, gill nets, dynamite fishing); heavily affected by the 1998 bleaching event; need to increase enforcement and active management; management system has been designed and implemented; complete protection of the reef now in effect; outreach activities ongoing; very successful considering its remoteness; initial lack of funds and management capacity has been overcome by partnerships.

Mark Eakin – NOAA – Caribbean basin-wide bleaching event underway now; thermal stress in the region is the strongest on record; catastrophic consequences seen; monitoring data for on the ground effects coming from Reef Base (encourages other monitoring efforts to make data available to Reef Base); now seeing disease coming into bleaching stressed areas.

Gregor Hodgson – Reef Check – international volunteer monitoring program (in 80+ countries); major projects in aquarium trade and tourism; Dr. Glynn predicted that bleaching events would increase in frequency and severity over time; 2005 now declared the hottest year on record (possibly in over 1000 years); how do we deal with these conditions? Reef check monitoring teams lack the resources to mobilize quickly and monitor the number of sites we would like data for? Request support for 1) dig deep and find emergency resources to help existing teams to document impacts; and 2) create a Working Group to determine how agencies and other organizations can collaborate on standard monitoring protocols.

Linda Paul – Hawaii Audubon Society – promotes highest possible protection for the NWHI; thanks Peter Young for DLNR work on state protections; NWHI should be designated as a world heritage and mixed cultural site; high number of endemic species including apex predators; vulnerable to threats (mostly invasive species); over 350 known invasives in the MHI and we're worried about these species getting up to NWHI; area is also vulnerable to bleaching in the northernmost areas; brings CRTF attention to marine aquarium issues; requests support for technical workshops on the effects of aquarium industry on coral reef habitats; outreach materials are here.

Qamar Schuyler – Mariana Island Nature Alliance – Add to Raney Pacific NGO report; founding member of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance; established a board and gone forward with strategic planning; looking for supports; mission to support CNMI resources through partnerships; proposed projects include hotline for reporting violations; environmental camps for teachers; lobbying for trash pick-up at popular public beaches; welcome your involvement and partnerships.

Sebastian Marino – Traditional leader of Hatahobei – remoteness of Helen reef is a blessing and a challenge; important diversity and determined to be a spawning area; remoteness makes the area vulnerable to poachers with destructive practices. Ask for support for enforcement of their southern border; assistance in a strategic and sustainable fashion would truly build the capacity of our community.

Report from Task Force Federal Agency Members: Accomplishments, Challenges & Needs

Department of Justice – defers to Monday's
Karen Wardzinski

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Penny Cutt

Stress the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) full commitment to protection of coral reefs; all decisions by USACE are protective to the maximum extent practicable; no resource receives more protection in the USACE than corals.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Merlyn Carlson

In 2005 invested \$3.3M for cooperative conservation program; provide opportunities for implementing sediment erosion reducing methods, etc.; USDA also administered a technology development grant program for conservation and environmental enhancement in concert with agriculture practices; three grants have been selected for the Pacific region; highlights partnerships with Palau; 1997 opened a Palau USDA field office; completion of feasibility report for restoring Palau topsoil fertility; compact road construction; soon will be announcing a soil survey update; cooperative conservation programs in Palau continuing to build partnerships; need to continue these efforts and invite other Task Force members to work with USDA in addressing local watershed issues; prevent and mitigate nutrient runoff

National Aeronautics & Space Administration
Paula Bontempi

Struck by urgency of coral reef needs and reminds Task Force that researchers are allies. First line of NASA's mission is to understand and protect our planet – critical to people who run resource management and research division. Exchange of ideas from this Task Force meeting proves useful to steer and (re)direct NASA and partner research according to the needs expressed today. Management needs should not be the only driver of research, as research and discovery are also vital. NASA invests in earth system science models and will invest over \$100 million in coming years to developing earth systems science models, expect that this ecosystem modeling work will include coral reefs.

Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs*David Cohen*

Office of Insular Affairs provides more financial support to Palau than any other federal agency, well over \$563 M over 15 years of Compact of Free Association. Just funded \$5.4 M wastewater improvement project, provides management funds, capitol improvement projects, and technical assistance. One major thrust of OIA is to provide assistance to territories (except Puerto Rico because of their political status) and to the Freely Associated States. Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands just received \$3.5 billion, of which over \$3.1 will go to grants. \$10.5 M each year to Hawaii which is eligible for marine management. Annual budget of over \$400 M, and almost all goes out to islands for assistance. OIA provides direct and indirect support to coral reef conservation (indirect support includes construction planning, operation and maintenance of infrastructure that can help control LBSP, including wastewater management). Be cautious not to interpret these numbers as evidence that OIA can take care of all available needs. There are still many gaps, OIA still needs partnerships with other federal agencies like those existing with NOAA and EPA and USDA. Now have an environmental infrastructure working group (idea/founder was John McCarroll, EPA) – invite any other agencies who provide funds and assistance for environmental infrastructure to join this group and assist in addressing \$800 M in estimated infrastructure needs.

Environmental Protection Agency*Wayne Nastri*

EPA utilizes research dollars, enforcement, management assistance and infrastructure as tools to address coral reef conservation. Provides millions to jurisdictions each year, including money to Guam for a wastewater treatment plant, and to Puerto Rico, Florida, and Saipan for wastewater treatment assistance. Maintain good partnerships with NOAA to fund coastal management projects. Provide 30,000 trees planted in Guam to protect drinking water sources. Provided grant in Tinian (CNMI) to academic institution to address piggery waste. Enforcement: Significant Clean Water Act actions, such as 50M in stormwater controls in HI (runoff controls from HI airports, roads and harbors). Guam: local water authorities have made great progress since EPA took enforcement action several years ago (reduction of 100s of gallons of waste spillage). American Samoa responded to EPA training to create interagency working group to address enforcement issues. EPA committed to Task Force to develop biological criteria for coral reefs; Announces that in 2006 will complete criteria for stony corals. Global Change Research Program undertakes research on reefs – funded major study and research in American Samoa. Funds University of HI impacts of climate change in Hawaii and other Pacific Islands (350K).

Department of Defense*Don Schregardus*

Established coral reef policy in 1997 as a result of international year of the reef. In this policy, Defense recognizes reefs as important habitats and commits to enhanced protection and is transitioning from management to protection. FY05 assessment of protected species and coral reef areas adjacent to Air Force sites – critical for developing protective measures and mitigating impacts for the future. Protective assessment in Saipan to understand how Navy activities may impact CNMI marine resources. Navy has dropped its planned base on findings of important corals, and is now looking for other anchorage areas. Guam – Navy hopes to expand a pier/wharf to support new class of military cargo ship called TAKE (faster, double-hulled, cleaner supply ship). Working with DOI to understand how when Defense winds down activities in Johnston Atoll in NWHI and mission there comes to an end, how DOI can continue to protect the area.

Department of State

Christine Dawson

Major role of Department of State is to serve as liaison between the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). Thanks to excellent Palauan hosts and arrangements, had very successful ICRI meeting, Key findings: officially conveyed U.S. offer to co-host ICRI Secretariat starting next year, and that offer was accepted.

U.S. Coast Guard (Department of Homeland Security)

Stephanie Burkhart

Responded to vessel grounding in NWHI, dedicated 250 cutter hours and 430 buoy tender vessel hours, over \$1.7 M dollar contribution. Involved with NOAA in marine debris removal, helping remove over 200 lbs of debris. New area for offering assistance – outreach. Coast Guard has a strong auxiliary force with an effective Dock Walker program, which consists of dock walkers that distribute materials on pollution, response and boating safety. Have had other agencies provide information on marine mammals and other marine resource concerns. Invitation to Task Force agencies to use Dock Walkers as a vehicle for distributing additional information on coral reef conservation.

Department of Interior

David Smith

DOI plays diverse role in coral reef conservation, from OIA support in territories and FAS, to owning and managing reefs in parks and wildlife refuges, to research and monitoring through USGS, USFWS and NPS, to assisting with NOAA to regulate acts that protect species within DOI waters. Highlights follow. Working with communities: two federal funding and grant opportunities workshops organized by FWS, well attended and reported very useful; Looking to replicate in the Pacific. Thanks to USCG for help with grounding in NWHI – success story from federal agency response, most response actions staged from USFWS facilities in Midway National Wildlife Refuge. Bleaching – impacts being felt in Refuges, but primarily NPS assets. USGS and NPS have been actively monitoring in Caribbean (in area of bleaching) since 1989. Recently developed rigorous monitoring technology involving sonar. Task Force should be taking a look at how to combine NGO, federal, state and territory input to inform what is happening in response to bleaching. Announcement: six of the Pacific National Wildlife Refuges are moving forward toward World Heritage Site status. Extensive public comment process and long-term plans for three of these refuges. World Heritage Site process, Federal Register Notice recently submitted to solicit public comment on four proposed sites.

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

Tim Keeney

We are very pleased to have worked with many Task Force partners on a variety of projects.

Some of these projects will be highlighted during Monday's meeting:

For example – NOAA has partnered with the Department of Justice, Coast Guard, and Department of Interior and others to conduct enforcement training workshops.

Also, a Caribbean grants workshop was conducted with Department of Interior, EPA, and USDA to highlight the variety of funding opportunities available.

We were also very pleased to host the first meeting of the Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community to increase collaboration and information sharing among MPA managers in the Pacific Island jurisdictions to improve their effectiveness.

In 2005, NOAA continued our partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and for the first time welcomed the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Hawaii Coastal Restoration Fund, which is a mitigation fund partnership of the Fish and Wildlife Service,

as new funding partners. 31 grants were supported at a total of \$3.2 million dollars to increase community awareness and provide solutions for localized threats to coral reefs. In 2005, NOAA completed 5 expeditions to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands including the first Educators-at-Sea cruise to bring teachers out to the islands. In addition, a cruise to CNMI and Guam was completed, including Wake Atoll for the first time. This year also marked completion of the first coral reef ecosystem cruise in the Main Hawaiian Islands. Each of these cruises accomplished extensive reef monitoring, assessment, mapping, and outreach and education activities to assist local managers in reef conservation. Lastly, I would like to highlight a new partnership called the Pacific Islands Educational Partnership Consortium. Through a grant to the University of Guam, the Consortium will support education, outreach, and program enhancements designed to increase the number of students who train and graduate in the marine and environmental sciences. Institutions partnering in this effort include University of Guam, American Samoa Community College, the College of Micronesia, the College of the Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas College, and Palau Community College. NOAA is very pleased to be able to work with these partners to increase capacity and opportunities in marine education.

Report from Steering Committee: Highlights of Key Activities

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The Steering Committee offers some highlights of collaborative, cooperative conservation efforts that provide a base upon which the Task Force and our partners can build.

Grants workshop in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

Andrew Gude – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Jennifer Kozlowski – NOAA

Task Force – direct Steering Committee to plan workshop in Pacific in early 2006

USVI POC – This was a very effective workshop. Would help the process for applying for different grants could be streamlined.

Mapping in Palau

Tim Batista – NOAA

Pacific Refuges Update

Jim Maragos – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Environmental Enforcement Workshops

Karen Wardzinski – Department of Justice

Report on ‘The State of Coral Reef Ecosystems of the U.S. and Freely Associated States’

Jenny Waddell – NOAA

Panel Discussion

Q. (NOAA) From the Grant Workshop, what were some of the things that people found most valuable?

A: (Gude) Vast majority of attendees did not know the breadth of funding opportunities available. Jurisdiction partners see the opportunity and value to network among themselves and establish relationships

Each jurisdiction and geographic regions within each jurisdiction has specific, localized needs.

Q. (American Samoa) Have you determined from workshops the difficulty regarding amounts of grants vs. work that needs to be done to receive them and fulfill reporting requirements.

A. (Gude) It has become overly burdensome to apply to piecemeal Federal grants. Grants may seem sufficient at Federal level. Numbers of dollars do not translate into effectiveness, because it costs more to do work in remote locations. Beholden upon Task Force members to address this as group and find ways to streamline the grant process, which will take quite a bit of effort.

Q. (DOI): Recognize the importance of enforcement. Have a unique opportunity. Impressed with Palau and their approaches, impressed with the state rangers. What are some of the enforcement challenges in DOI refuges?

A. (Maragos) Exploring the idea of using remote surveillance in these areas—remoteness of some of these areas preclude the use of conventional enforcement. Sensors on land and in water (video, hydrophones, radar) can also be used.

Q. Regarding enforcement capacity, what is the importance of mapping, notification, etc?

A. (Wardzinski) Rely on other agencies to do enforcement themselves. Useful to have lawyers working with agencies up front to make sure that information is sufficient and that cases can be made. Combine enforcement with public outreach/press approach to communicate seriousness of law enforcement.

(Maragos) Johnston Atoll is very important for national security reasons as well, which makes enforcement important.

(Wadzinski) Vessel pollution initiative, which includes enforcement activities against vessels. Successful in receiving information from people on ships themselves—whistle blowers (get bounty fee). Foreign flagged vessels—even successful.

Q. (DOS) Enforcement resolution. International MPA Congress (IMPAC) session well received. Recognize a need for more international work—Ad Hoc committee set up to develop better capacity training and will examine statutory and traditional methods of enforcement. Hope that Task Force can join Ad Hoc committee. Contact Christine Dawson or Barbara Best.

Q. (EPA) Regarding monitoring activities for the State of the Reef Report, sampling methodology is not consistent, how do you include new datasets and make summary judgements.

A. (Wadell). There are data sets that are consistent among a few jurisdictions. EPA has done good job. Would love to have water quality info collected at the same time as all of the other monitoring information.

Special Session I: Building Capacity for Coral Reef Conservation

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The following session was designed to examine ways in which resource needs can be addressed through (1) developing creative funding strategies; (2) building human capacity through education, training, and partnership building; and (3) technical assistance in responding to damage events. Each panelist considered what are the top two challenges and/or limiting factors for effective capacity building and what are the top two recommendations to address these limitations?

Building Financial Capacity: Sustainable Financing

(presentation available at www.coralreef.gov)

Don Hess – College of the Marshall Islands

Task Force – Charge to the Steering Committee to review recommendations and develop options and a Sustainable Financing Tool-box.

Building Human Capacity: Education, Training, & Building Partnerships

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

Marine Resources Pacific Consortium (MAREPAC)

Noah Idechong – Palau National Congress, MAREPAC Board Member

Palau International Coral Reef Center

Patrick Tellei – Board Chair, Palau International Coral Reef Center

Knowledge of local policy makers is essential for the development and implementation of sound marine conservation policies and strategies. If various Federal agencies will transfer information and knowledge, need trained professionals on the ground. Important to strengthen or create marine or environmental programs. First program of leaders graduated from Palau Community Colleges in 2003 and transferred to four year colleges

Excited by announcement for the Pacific Island Education Consortium to meet the challenges of sound resource management. Promote efficient use of resources to meet local and regional goals. PICRC and other partners are all helping to enhance training and education.

Coral Reef Sustainable Destination Model

Brian Huse – Coral Reef Alliance

Community Watershed Partnership

Robin DeMeo – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Freely Associated States Coral & Reef Fish Monitoring Training

Steven Victor – Palau International Coral Reef Center

Panel Discussion

Q. (NOAA): Each panel member provided examples of needed capacity. Recognize Coral Reef management fellows. Asked other agencies to think about how they can build on Fellowship program.

Sunia internship program. Announce opening of application process—FAS are now eligible.

Q. (DOI): struck by the degree of community involvement at every level. How innovative Palau has been for sustainable funding, especially through the use of user fees. Initial challenges for sustainable financing is that the user pays, interesting to hear how those challenges were overcome.

A. (Huse). It needs to be sustainable capacity building in general—human, financial, educational, mixture of stakeholders

Micronesia Shark Foundation is a good example—started by dive operator. Because they have a stake in showing big sharks to divers—this is an example of proactive solutions on part of private sector. Providing better product and sustainability of their own business.

(Idechong). Willingness to pay was the first challenge. Second, link the money to a fund. Third, National legislation to develop a trust fund. Essential to convince people that there is value in putting money into conservation.

Q. (RMI). Thank you for extending Sunia fellowship to FAS.

Monitoring responsibility rests with national government—the College of the Marshall Islands is a partner.

Regarding MAREPAC, unable to get a sufficient understanding of MAREPAC's role. Perhaps it would be important for MAREPAC to evaluate how it is working—so that it is effective and efficient, so that RMI is not left out.

A. (Idechong) MAREPAC has been working at the local level and will assess situation in RMI, to provide better support.

Call for Task Force members to assess MAREPAC

Q. (EPA) Likes the current Coral Reef Sustainable Destination Model. In future models will overall watershed management factor in.

A. (Huse) looking at expanding model into entire tourism sector. Need ambassadors with connection to business and government to work closely and investigate terrestrial issues as well.

Q. (USVI) Several watershed models out there. One example: “Non-point education for municipal officials” for those who make the zoning decisions can be a very successful tool. Have any of the groups considered incorporating this into plans?

A. (DeMeo). Not heard of that program, but this is what NRCS does – find solutions and implement within watershed.

Building Technical Capacity: Responding to Major Damage Events

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The next panel, addressing building sufficient technical capacity to respond to major damage events considered the top three needs for addressing such events (for example, technical assistance, training, information, development of response plans).

M/V Cape Flattery Vessel Grounding, Hawaii

Michael Molina – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Gerry Davis – NOAA

M/V Big Blue Explorer Vessel Grounding, Palau

Portia Franz – Palau Environmental Quality Protection Board

Kyowa Violet Vessel Grounding & Oil Spill, Yap

Andy Tafleichig – Yap Marine Resources Management Division

Panel Discussion

Q. (NOAA) Suggest Steering Committee develop an in-depth workshop on this issue topic at the next task force meeting.

Upcoming Workshops include: Florida, Vessel grounding contingency workshop in NWHI, oilspill workshop in Palau

Q. (USVI) Did anyone get money from any of the vessels that grounded?

A. (Molina) not yet, for *Cape Flattery*. Did open Oil Pollution Fund for reimbursement to Agencies.

(Franz) insurance coverage would only be a few thousand dollars

(Tafleichig) Vessel did bring in a clearing operation. Existing civil case.

Q. (ACOE) Who undertook restoration. Compensatory mitigation, case opened

A. (Davis) RP hired contractor. Worked in concert with Federal agencies, court case is still pending.

Q. (American Samoa) Prior to incidents, did response plans include coral reef areas, including for vessel removal.

A. (Molina) Do not believe there is a well formulated plan where Task Force would be involved. There are agency plans and a high level of coordination that could lead to good plans.

(Davis) Responses are built around OPA 90 RRT endeavor. Unless there is an oilspill there is not a response plan.

Q. (Florida) Prevention—Cape Flattery—eye opening that tug operator caused problem—do they get training.

A. (Davis) There were a lot of lessons learned from this case – there are preventative measures that can be taken to do a better job, including during the initial response.

Q. (EPA) What is the capability to recover costs?

A. (Wardzinski) Some statutes—depends on where grounding takes place and if an oil spill is involved. Can be more complicated if there is no oil spill if the grounding occurs outside National Marine Sanctuary and DOI lands.

Special Session II: Marine Protected Area Networks in Reef Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities (presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

This session highlights management efforts, recent science to support the design of MPA networks, as well as the unique perspective of our jurisdiction partners, their challenges and successes in utilizing marine protected areas as one option for coral reef ecosystem conservation.

The first panel provided background on management schemes and recent scientific findings. The panelists, highlighted ways their research can be used as a tool for the design and implementation of Marine Protected Areas, and how it might be adapted for various regions or jurisdictions, serving individual needs.

Managing for Uncertainty in a Changing World

Rod Salm – The Nature Conservancy

Long-Term Research in American Samoa on Adjustments of Corals to Climate Change

Charles Birkeland – USGS, University of Hawaii

80 species of corals in shallow water, receive intense heat and are surviving, possess strong resilience

1979 had large crown of thorns outbreak, removed 406,000 and was still a problem

Reefs are rebounding regularly after damage events (storms)

Extensive bleaching

Coral recruited out of the rubble

Algae problem smothering growth of coral

Some very heavy stress areas, experience up to 35.5 degrees

The reef fish are adjusted to low oxygen conditions at night

Studying genetics versus environmental factors and how they affect resilience

Corals from the lagoon grew faster even if relocated, conduct adaptation studies by transplanting adults

People have the ability to see the big picture, ridge to reef, think globally, must first get rid of the problem and then think about restoring.

Modeling for Management: Predicting Coral Heat-stress Patterns for Palau's Coral Reef Ecosystems

William Skirving – NOAA

Spawning Aggregates of Reef Fishes: Myths, Methods, & MPAs

Patrick Colin – Coral Reef Research Foundation

Panel Discussion

Q. (NASA) Are changes in sea surface temperature (SST) the only trigger of bleaching events? What about light level?

- A. (Skirving) Correct, light is heating the water, working on effects of light, very crucial part
- Q. (NASA) Are there additional technologies available?
- A. (Skirving) Good effort in the Caribbean, using satellite technology, in Pacific NMFS putting out bouys, drifters being used more and more
- Q. (NASA)-What type of information is needed on water quality?
- A. (Skirving)-turbidity and light are the factors here, satellites not good yet, trying to solve using current instruments
- Q. (NOAA) - What can we do to promote resilience in this case?
- A. (Salm)-Could use funds to track the incidents and monitor to then determine the areas that are resilient, ex. High temperatures that then quickly dropped show low mortality, lower temperatures for prolonged period caused more mortality.

Panel: Jurisdiction Efforts to Develop & Strengthen MPA Networks

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

Jurisdiction partners shared their individual efforts for designing, implement, and managing their Marine Protected Area sites and highlighting the successes and challenges they face.

As each jurisdiction has particular ecological systems and faces unique social factors and management regimes, this session was not intended to fully develop each jurisdictions situation but rather to provide the Task Force with a general sense of the common and unique opportunities and challenges throughout the regions.

With this big picture view, Task Force and partners will be in a position to better focus efforts, find collaborative solutions, and be able to more effectively identify and fill gaps in both information and resources.

Guam

Jay Gutierrez

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Greg Moretti – MPA Coordinator

American Samoa

Three types of MPA's in American Samoa

Community sites, with assistance the communities implement management plans.

Territorial – managed by DMWR and Parks and Recreation, strategy to look at existing and new areas, criteria based on Best Management Practices. Outreach and education is very important.

Pohnpei

Hawaii

Althine Clark – Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Palau

Alma Ridep-Morris – Ministry of Resources and Development

Panel: Tools and Opportunities to Develop and Strengthen MPAs

(presentations available at www.coralreef.gov)

The final panel provided highlights of partnership opportunities and resources available to our jurisdiction partners when considering the use of Marine Protected Areas as a management and conservation tool.

Pacific Island MPA Community (PIMPAC)

Willy Kostka – Conservation Society of Pohnpei and PIMPAC member

MPA – Federal Advisory Committee

Lelei Peau – American Samoa and FAC Subcommittee Chair: Stewardship & Effectiveness

Panel Discussion

Q. (Cohen) Any remaining obstacles to establishing the recent protected area in Palau?

A. (Palau) Legislation recently amended to address some U.S. concerns, protection of mangrove areas, need financial and technical assistance to continue

Q. (Cohen) Enforcement resulted in adverse actions, when CNMI lost case on appeal, is CNMI continuing to vigorously enforce existing regulations, this ruling aside?

A. (CNMI) Yes continuing to do so, has not affected our efforts.

Q. Does marine area designation also consider upstream and watershed resources?

A. (Hawaii) Yes, have been conducting watershed studies.

A. (American Samoa) Important to find the source of the problem, join forces and share resources, need to realize that the upland has a significant effect on the reefs

Q. (NOAA) American Samoa and CNMI MPA's – how much will communities be involved in developing these plans?

A. (American Samoa) Involving the community is a priority, also important to involve wider community. Land ownership is community based.

A. (CNMI) Extensive community consultation process modeled after GBR process.

Q. (DOI) Regarding resistance of fishing community and MPA's, any difference between recreational fishermen and commercial?

A. (Hawaii) Addressing both, resistance in various areas, most near-shore fishing is recreational and subsistence, most commercial is offshore

Audience Comment – Heard of much progress in MPAs but have not developed a national monitoring system of Coral Reefs, suggest coordinate MPA and monitoring network together.

Business Meeting & Decision Items (full text of decision items available at www.coralreef.gov)

Overview of new resolutions and action items (10)

1) LAS, agreed, unanimously adopted

Decision Adopted

USVI – LAS funding includes a lot of in kind funding, should include this in language.

2) Caribbean bleaching event,

DOI– Commit NOAA and DOI to lead an ad hoc working group to begin initial response and strategizing.

Guam – requests statement of support included for Pacific in the event of a similar event in the Pacific. This will allow quick action and response.

Comment: Addition of specific language regarding Pacific region will complicate this resolution. Understood that this resolution is open to both Atlantic and Pacific regions.

DOD – could we bring in assistance from the private sector?

DOI – Resolution includes this, could possibly specifically call out NGO's and other partners

NOAA – team for this is already multi-disciplinary

USVI – have ad hoc group put together a lessons learned

DOI – long term effort, would like to have a progress report @ USVI meeting, fall 2006

Decision Adopted

3) Capacity to develop response to grounding events statement

Decision Adopted

4) Call for additional enforcement capacity, proposed statement by Task Force

Effort to link Task Force and ICRI efforts.

Report on enforcement tools at the USVI meeting, fall 2006

Decision Adopted

5) Recommendations for sustainable Financing Toolbox

Decision Adopted

6) Proposal to conduct Grant Workshop in the Pacific.

Decision Adopted

7) Coral Reef protected areas in Nation Action Strategy – tasked to complete inventory.

Decision Adopted

8) Develop options for a year of the reef, work with our ICRI partners

Decision Adopted

9) Requesting suggestions for 2006 meeting dates

Washington D.C. Meeting: first week in May, dates to be determined

Fall Jurisdiction Meeting: mid-October, dates to be determined

10) Accept and approve the recent report on past resolutions of the TF

(EPA) – Task Force to take another look at discontinuing resolutions for adjustments and/or how to change and revitalize them.

Other Business

Education and Outreach Workshops (presentation available at www.coralreef.gov)

Alissa Barron – NOAA

Closing Remarks

Palau Vice President Elias Comsek Chin

Full Remarks