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Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Ka Palapala Ho‘omaopopo: Papahānaumokuākea

The Informative Letter: Papahānaumokuākea

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Aloha Kākou!

We are very pleased to announce the release of the Draft Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for your review and comment. We much appreciate your patience in waiting for this document. The range of topics covered in these documents reflects the span and scope of the Monument. We look forward to receiving your comments and to seeing you at one of the public meetings we will be holding in June.

In this issue of Ka Palapala Ho‘omaopopo, we describe what is in the Draft Monument Management Plan, how to obtain a copy of the documents, and how to submit your comments to us. We also include a schedule of public meetings where you will have the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification, and provide your comments.

And as usual, we also include a “good news” story, this one about the reopening of the Midway Atoll visitor program.

Please read on!

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Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Draft Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

It's Here!

The four-volume, 1,200 page Draft Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Management Plan and Environmental Assessment are available for a 75-day public review and comment period beginning April 23. As directed by Presidential Proclamation 8031, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and State of Hawai'i (collectively, the Co-Trustees) modified NOAA's Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Proposed National Marine Sanctuary Draft Management Plan to create the Draft Monument Management Plan. The draft plan is issue-based and was prepared to meet each agency's conservation planning requirements. It was developed with the assistance of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Two alternatives are analyzed in the Environmental Assessment. Under the No Action Alternative, the Co-Trustees would continue to implement activities to address priority management needs based on agency-specific plans. Under the Proposed Action (as described in the Draft Monument Management Plan), the Co-Trustees would implement new and expanded activities, in addition to ongoing activities, in a coordinated fashion to manage priority management needs.

The documents are available for a 75-day Federal review period through July 8, 2008. The 30-day State comment period will begin on June 8. Please see page 4 for more information about how to submit your comments.



Obtaining a Copy of the Draft Monument Management Plan

Now that it's available, how do you get your copy?
You have multiple options:

- The Draft Monument Management Plan and Environmental Assessment are immediately available to be downloaded from the Monument website at <http://www.papahanaumokuakea.gov>.
- The documents have been mailed to all State of Hawai'i public libraries, where they will be available for public review.
- A limited number of copies are available on compact disk or in hard copy by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service in Honolulu at 808.792.9530.

What's in the Draft Management Plan?

The Draft Monument Management Plan (found in Volume I) describes a comprehensive and coordinated management regime to achieve the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Monument and to address priority management needs over the next 15 years. It is divided into three sections:

- Section 1 introduces Papahānaumokuākea, describing the setting; status and condition of natural, cultural, and historic resources; environmental and anthropogenic stressors; and the Monument's global significance.
- Section 2 describes the management framework, including the legal and policy basis; initial management structure; and the vision, mission, and guiding principles that provide the overarching policy direction.
- Section 3 consists of 22 action plans that address six priority management needs and provide an organizational structure for implementing management strategies. These priority management needs are:
 - understanding and interpreting the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands,
 - conserving wildlife and habitats,
 - reducing threats to Monument resources,
 - managing human uses,
 - coordinating conservation and management activities, and
 - achieving effective Monument operations.

Volume II of the Plan includes the Environmental Assessment, developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343, Environmental Impact Statements.

Volumes III and IV of the Plan include appendices, both supporting documents and reference materials. Public review is requested for some of these documents, including the Monument permit application unified public notification policy in Appendix A, the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge Draft Conceptual Site Plan (Appendix B in Volume IV), the Draft Visitor Services Plan for Midway Atoll in Appendix C, and the Fish and Wildlife Service's Compatibility Determinations for National Wildlife Refuges in Appendix D.



R. Shallenberger/USFWS



R. Shallenberger/USFWS



J. Maragos/USFWS

Opportunities to Get Involved

We want to hear from you!

Your thoughtful comments will be very important to us as we develop a final Monument Management Plan. You may submit your comments in writing or verbally through the options listed below. The 75-day federal public comment period on these documents officially begins on April 23 and ends July 8. Comments submitted between June 8 and July 8 will also be officially addressed by the State of Hawai'i, though all comments will be reviewed and considered by the three managing agencies in developing a final plan.

Join Us at Public Meetings

We have planned a statewide series of meetings in June where you will have an opportunity to ask questions about the Monument Management Plan and to provide formal comments. The meetings will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. They will begin with an informal "talk story" session, followed by more formal meetings where you may present your comments. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- June 9 Wai'anae Parks and Recreation Complex, O'ahu
- June 12 Maui Arts & Cultural Center, Kahului, Maui
- June 13 Lāna'i High and Elementary School, Lāna'i
- June 16 Kūlana 'Ōiwi Hālau, Moloka'i
- June 17 He'eia State Park, Kāne'ohe, O'ahu
- June 18 King Kamehameha Hotel, Kona, Hawai'i
- June 19 Mokupāpapa Discovery Center, Hilo, Hawai'i
- June 23 Hilton Kaua'i Beach Resort, Līhu'e, Kaua'i
- June 24 Japanese Cultural Center, Honolulu, O'ahu

A meeting also will be held at the Main Interior Building in Washington, D.C., on June 11 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Submit Written Comments by Mail

Written comments must be postmarked no later than July 8, 2008, and mailed to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Box 50167
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850

Hand Deliver Comments

Comments may be hand delivered during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. through July 8, 2008, to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalani'anaole
Federal Building
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-231
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Electronically Mail Comments

Written comments may be submitted by e-mail no later than July 8, 2008, to:

PMNM_MMP_Comments@fws.gov



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Peering Through the Window: *Midway Reopens to Visitors*

When designating Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, President Bush specifically provided for a special area to be established around Midway Atoll where visitation would be enhanced, where people could pay homage to those who sacrificed for our freedom, and where people could peer through the window to learn about and experience the wonders of the Monument. About 1,800 people took advantage of the opportunity to visit the atoll to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Battle of Midway on June 4, 2007, but beginning in January, a limited number of visitors can now spend more time on the atoll to immerse themselves in Papahānaumokuākea's resources.



Alakai workers clone bunchgrass to restore native habitats.

The first group of visitors were a dynamic and visionary group (now referred to as Alaka'i) representing governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, traditional Hawaiian advisors, and educators from elementary to university level. After immersing themselves in this living laboratory, they set out to create a detailed action plan that would use Midway as a catalyst for navigating change through education in the environments of the main Hawaiian Islands and beyond. The group continues their efforts today back in their home environment, re-inspired to spread their message of better caring for our land and ocean resources.

Later in January, Midway welcomed students from Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences. Andy Read, Rachel Carson Associate Professor of Marine Conservation Biology, wrote "Our goal in bringing our Marine Conservation Biology class to Midway Atoll was to encourage the students to think about the concept of marine wilderness and its role in conservation, particularly as it pertains to the new Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument."

"We were struck by the remarkable abundance of life – more than a million albatross, teeming schools of fish, and healthy coral reefs – interspersed amongst the remains of military bases, battles, and gun batteries. We were struck by the remarkable

conservation successes achieved... all of which give us hope not just for Midway and the Monument, but more broadly for marine conservation in general. And we were inspired by our students who in the space of 10 short days became knowledgeable advocates for the conservation of Laysan and black-footed albatross (amongst many other things)," Read continued.

In March, the first Oceanic Society natural history tours for general visitors headed for Midway for week-long explorations of the atoll's natural and historic resources. Some of these visitors had been waiting for 6 years for the return of the visitor program. A few were repeat visitors, including one returning for her sixth visit to the atoll! While there, visitors not only learn about remote island ecosystems but also contribute to habitat restoration and marine debris cleanup projects. Oceanic Society has planned seven trips to Midway during 2008; only a few seats remain.

"We welcome these visitors to Midway, for this is not just a fun vacation but a life-changing experience," said Refuge Manager Barry Christenson. "Whether they are university students, educators, retirees, or scientists, our visitors leave Midway with new-found knowledge of how their activities at home can affect a small remote atoll in the midst of a vast ocean. Our goal is to inspire them to make our world a better place."



Duke University students enjoying a typical Midway classroom

Have you moved? If so, please call us at (808) 792 9530 with your updated address information. Mahalo!



Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Box 50167
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850

Need More Information About Papahānaumokuākea?

Feel free to call any one of our offices:

Susan White, FWS Superintendent
300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 5-231
Box 50167
Honolulu, HI 96850
(808) 792 9480

'Aulani Wilhelm, NOAA Superintendent
6600 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96825
(808) 397 2660

Athline Clark, State Co-Manager
6600 Kalaniana'ole Highway, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96825
(808) 271 2555



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Visit our website at:

papahanaumokuakea.gov

Important Dates to Remember:

- June 9-24** Public meetings across Hawai'i
- July 8** Public comment period on Draft Monument Management Plan/EA closes