



**WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL**

Report of the American Samoa Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan Advisory Panel Meeting

Monday, April 19, 2010

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m

DMWR Conference Room

Pago Pago, American Samoa

1. Welcome and Introductions

Judy McCoy, Chair opened the meeting and all introduced themselves. Advisory Panel (AP) members in attendance were Nonu Tuisamoa, Tony Langkilde, Vaasa Simanu, Elia Henry, and [new CDPP AP member-to-be] Kitaru Vaiau. Also in attendance was Stephen Haleck (Council Chair), Will Sword (Council Member), Adam Bailey (NMFS PIRO), and Steve Beverly (SPC). Council staff included Kitty Simonds, Eric Kingma, Kelly Finn, and Joshua DeMello, and Fini Aitaoto.

2. Approval of Draft Agenda

AP Members approved the agenda.

3. Fishery Management Issues

Kelly Finn, Council staff, provided an update on the Council's ongoing fishery management issues, including Annual Catch Limits, Offshore Aquaculture, Catch Shares, and Modifications to the American Samoa Longline Limited Entry Program.

McCoy asked if the modifications to the longline limited-entry program would affect the renewal of existing permits. Finn replied that landings are still a requirement for the program. Bailey provided additional information on permitting information for the fishery.

McCoy also asked if modifications to the program could ensure that the program does not open the door so wide that we kick ourselves out. She said we don't want to be so restrictive that we can't rebuild the small boat fishery. Langkilde echoed her concern about qualifications for the longline fishery, saying that anyone who fished should be allowed, since longlining is relatively new in American Samoa. Finn said that the rules now say that 'documented participation' as required for a permit transfer means previous longline experience in waters around American Samoa landing pelagic species.

Beverly said that there is a need to have a mechanism to allow young people to get into the fishery because there will continue to be an attrition in the fishery. McCoy said that everyone in the American Samoa community should be able to participate, not just indigenous American Samoans. The idea was to have these longline permits be provided to the community before outside interests (perhaps through the community development program).

Overall, it was stressed to ensure:

- young people with no fishing history be able to enter the fishery
- American Samoans and all who make this there home not get squeezed out of the fishery

4. Update on Fishing in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

Eric Kingma, Council staff, provided the AP with an update on the Council's recommendations for fishing in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument.

Langkilde asked about the not being able to sell or bring back the fish and Kingma explained that this is allowed for traditional uses/purposes through customary exchange. McCoy asked if the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) was a management entity and Kingma explained that they are not as there is no territorial sea [in the Monument area] so they have no management authority. She asked how we propose to police these measures and Kingma explained that it would be customary law enforcement and he said that the Council once again recommended that USCG station a vessel here in American Samoa. Simonds explained how there are foreign incursions in AS yet the U.S. is a member of international regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) and we need to keep bringing this up.

The topic of expanding Fagatele Bay NMS into more sites was brought up. AP members felt the sites selected so far don't need to be protected so it is unclear why they're being proposed for protection. An example was given whereby in Noumea they have fishing reserves but they are re-evaluated every year and may be removed, kept or changed annually. An area may be closed for only 3 months (to protect a spawning aggregation) or may be permanent (a popular tourist diving spot). Questions arose as to how would an expanded sanctuary be established and enforced in AS as now people go fish there [in the current Fagatele Bay NMS] at night because of the lack of enforcement. Others asked what are places being protected from. Concern was expressed about this permanent loss of fishing area and questions about what is the justification.

5. Fisheries Development

Kingma also presented on fisheries development plans for American Samoa. He provided the Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) for American Samoa to the AP and reviewed the type of fisheries development projects contained in the MCP.

Kingma solicited the AP on:

- what areas should be included as good places for new boat ramps-areas which are safe and would provide good fishing opportunities. A map was marked on and provided- it identified areas for consideration as: Leone, Afao and Amanave in the southwest.
- potential fuel storage in Manua on Ta'u or Ofu.
- the new fish market and future activities

Haleck said there are boat ramps in Aunu'u but that it is designed such that at low tide it is unusable. Fagasa has one but cement is cracked and it is not operable (tsunami damage), the western side needs one such as Leone, at a cove.

McCoy wants to ensure existing ice companies are not pushed out of business (Haleck Ice, one in Tafuna, etc.). Electricity is expensive; AS pays between .43 -.47 per kilowatt-hr.

With regards to the MCP, McCoy says a main hurdle to development is transportation of fish out of AS and asked if this was being addressed in the MCP. Kingma said the fresh fish market is difficult and has strict requirements [with regards to fish temperature, etc.] but that another option is the frozen fish market (flash freezing) yet many vessels in AS currently do not have that capacity. Transportation is a hurdle but there are some options, these currently proposed projects are all for the local market.

McCoy asked about the [proposed] fish co-op. Kingma explained that the AS Department of Commerce directed a co-op to be formed and this is being done; it is in the works and this group is soliciting fishermen to be members. Their co-op group looked at existing coops including Guam's Fishermen's Cooperative Association and some in Alaska. Tuisamoa explained they came to him to send invitations to fishermen – fees are \$10 for the first month. Simonds explained that there is a lot of federal funding available.

Langkilde has an application with EDA Gail Fujita for his project in Tafuna. He thinks these small cottage industries are the only way to go. Small cold storage facilities in Manua, one in Ofu and one in Falasau (has a good wharf for cold storage). He said the problem is that capitalization is lacking.

6. Data Collection and Monitoring

A. Cooperative Research Priorities

Finn presented on the cooperative research program and presented the prior recommendation for American Samoa and the current status of these recommendations and asked the AP for new or continuing recommendations for the next fiscal year.

Tuisamoa said that the existing critical needs are sufficient for now.

Langkilde said that the fleet needs to be rebuilt before any research can be done cooperatively with fishermen.

In regard to #4 (a study on rebuilding the alia fleet): McCoy said that a cost-benefit analysis of rebuilding the alia fleet needs to be done to see if it is worth rebuilding the fleet. Beverly said that a study should be done to replace the alia fleet [with other safer small vessels] and not rebuild it.

Beverly described his cooperative research project and solicited for a place to live, a car, and a fishing boat to do the research testing target catch rates in the longline fishery using larger circle hooks. The AP asked about compensation. He said it is negotiable. Simonds asked about available lab space. Tuisamoa said that DMWR has an empty lab space that he could use.

Simonds asked about prior coop research recommendation on FADs (#6). Tuisamoa said they need a boat to charter to deploy the FADs that is safe and big enough for the seas outside Tutuila. He said it would be nice to have their own boat to deploy FADs and to do regular maintenance on the buoy. Kingma asked about targeted depth. Tuisamoa said the deepest is 3000 m and the shallowest is 100 m. Improved FAD design was discussed and recommended –Steve Beverly described a FAD type where they combine or daisy chain such that it digs in better and aren't as

easily lost. Kingma said this design type is now also being tried in Hawaii and it may be worth exploring here.

B. Bio-sampling

Dave Hamm, of NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, briefly described the biosampling efforts which are happening in American Samoa.

C. FishBox.org

Joshua DeMello, Council staff, provided a presentation on community management of resources. The presentation provided an overview of the Council's plan for engaging communities to develop partnerships between fishermen and scientists to collect needed data for fishery management.

Sword said we need to entice fishers in AS to get involved in this and start recording their catches. This could be promoted at fishing tournaments and he thought of perhaps offering some type of reward through the recreational fishing group and perhaps through the Fishbox.org webmaster for someone with the most records or something of that type.

Suggestions were made to add a link to Oceanwatch for AS.

Other discussions were on the type of data to be recorded on the website and the need to look into-confidentiality issues. Dave Hamm's shop is in charge of biosampling and he may need to set up some training for the sampling aspects of Fishbox.

The group noted that Fishbox.org should also provide information to the communities on how to participate in different programs, particularly biosampling and training. DeMello noted that staff is working on a suite of community monitoring opportunities that the Council can make available on Fishbox also.

7. Ecosystem Indicators

A. Physical/Biological/Socio-economic

Kingma explained that this is something we want to start incorporating into our management actions and that this is the first time it has been included on an agenda but we want to start asking for this type of information from our FEP groups. Tuisamoa said their fish techs are not seeing nearly as much fishing activity in nearshore waters. Sword said some Tongan boats are going out at night spearfishing and he asked Tuisamoa if they report this to DMWR; he said they do. He also said they're collecting socioeconomic information (costs, etc) and where people are fishing. It all depends on the honesty of the fisherman. Hamm told Tuisamoa they need to collect biosampling information on every fish in the cooler. Sword asked about a guy around Aunu'u and degradation of reefs due to using bleach in fishing he also reported residue from the sludge boat on other side of Aunu'u and that the sludge is moving in that direction. He asked what EPA is doing –is this being monitored. Sword asked how DMWR could combat under or non-reporting. Tuisamoa said it is difficult because these guys avoid them, come in at night. McCoy asked about a FV Horizon getting pulled over by Rose Island and they may have been brought in for safety violations, not fishing violations. Kingma responded that we haven't heard of any fishing violations around Rose Atoll.

B. Update on Lunar Calendar

Joshua DeMello, Council staff, provided a presentation on the AS lunar calendar project and solicited ideas for information to be added to the calendar. He noted that Fini Aitaoto is the Council contact for this project in American Samoa.

McCoy asked if there is a place that the knowledge that is being collected is being stored, a repository of the knowledge. She said that once the calendar is thrown away, there needs to be a place to always go and find the info. DeMello said that fishbox.org may be able to play a role in this also.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Review of Previous Recommendations

Finn went over the previous AP recommendations from the Global AP Meeting in December held in Honolulu. DeMello noted that the Council is working with island areas and University of Hawaii at Hilo (UHH) to send students from AS to UHH's aquaculture and fisheries certificate program.

Suggestions were made to promote fisheries science and management through the local science fair (in March); perhaps promote a science fair theme in marine science; and to promote awareness of fisheries and careers in fisheries in American Samoa through the science fair, meeting with science teachers, etc. It was also brought up that it is good to provide students with opportunity, but the teachers also need to be provided with training.

A suggestion was made for the AP to work with Fini Aitaoto, the Island Coordinator, to publicize the Council and advisory meetings in the community to invite additional groups like high school students.

10. Discussion and Recommendations

The discussions are included under the respective agenda topics. The AP recommends the following:

Recommend: That the longline limited entry program modifications consider changing the program to provide the American Samoa community the priority to obtain permits.

Recommend: The Council support new and existing projects (e.g. fish processing, cold-storage, etc) to support fishery development in American Samoa.

Recommend: The Council look at providing additional boat ramps on the west side of Tutuila (e.g. Leone, Afao and Amanave) in its fisheries development plans.

Recommend: The Council hold a student symposium on fisheries science and management in coordination with its next Council meeting in American Samoa, preferably in March in conjunction with the annual science fair.

Recommend: The Council provide teacher workshops in American Samoa to provide them with information on fisheries science and management.

Recommend: The Council provide opportunities for students that return home with marine science training when local agencies can not provide that opportunity.

Recommend: The Council provide the US provide some tangible benefits to the American Samoa community for the designation of the Rose Atoll MNM.