



International Pacific Marine Educators Conference Establishes Network to Protect the Ocean, Presentations Available Online

(HONOLULU – 31 January 2007) The International Pacific Marine Educators Conference (IPMEC), which brought together marine educators from 18 countries Jan. 15 to 18, 2007, in Honolulu, has resulted in the establishment of a Pacific network of marine educators designed to ensure the health of the Pacific and the communities that depend upon it. The network aims to facilitate real action in marine education and highlight the need for ocean stewardship across the Pacific.

The conference was hosted and sponsored by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WPRFMC). It was originally to be held at and co-hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji but was relocated to Honolulu after the Dec. 5, 2006, coup in that country. Additional support for the conference came from NOAA Ocean Exploration Program, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, National Marine Educators Association, The Ocean Foundation and the World Ocean Network's Sustainable Actions Committee.

“The Pacific contains the largest and most diverse coral reef ecosystems, produces two-thirds of the world's tuna, extends over almost half of the globe, and has major impacts on the world's climate,” notes Kitty M. Simonds, WPRFMC executive director, on the importance of this landmark occasion.

Nearly 100 marine educators participated in the conference both onsite and online during two days of presentations and one day of workshops. The conference featured nearly 60 on-site and real-time web-delivered presentations from areas spanning the East Coast of the United States to Papua New Guinea. All of these presentations as well as the opening and closing ceremonies are now available as web-based streaming video at the College of Exploration website <www.coexploration.org/ipmec/>.

Ben Mikaere Namakin, an environmental educator originally from Kiribati and currently at the Conservation Society for Pohnpei, was selected to chair the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee for the next IPMEC and to further establish the network. He replaces Sylvia Spalding, WPRFMC media and education specialist, who chaired the first committee. Offers to host the next conference came from Australia, Easter Island and Fiji.

For more information, visit www.ipmec.info or contact Sylvia Spalding at Sylvia.spalding@noaa.gov or Ben Namakin at bnamakin@yahoo.com.

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IPMEC Organizing Committee 2007-2008

- Ben Mikaere Namakin, Conservation Society for Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (Chair)
- Leimana DaMate, Pacific Islands Resource Management Institute, Hawaii
- Jarad Makaiau, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Hawaii
- Jasmine Mason, Thompson Rivers University, British Columbia, Canada
- Jennifer Metz, Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research, Hawaii
- Luis Pintos, Centro AquaSendas, Chile
- Craig Strang, Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley, USA
- Teny Topalian, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northern Mariana Islands
- Nacaniele “Nat” Tuivavalaqi, College of the Marshall Islands, Marshall Islands
- Andrew Vance, Melbourne Girls College, Australia