



**Report of the American Samoa Advisory Panel Meeting
June 5, 2013
Toa's Bar and Grill Conference Room
Tafuna, American Samoa**

1. Welcome & Introductions

William Sword, Council Member, opened the Advisory Panel (AP) meeting. Due to extreme rain and flooding, the only AP members in attendance were Nonu Tuisamoa, George Poysky, Tony Langkilde and Faasala Augafa. Others in attendance included Ueta Faasili (Council Contractor) and Nathan Ilaoa (Council Island Coordinator).

2. Update on previous AP recommendations:

Ilaoa read through the previous recommendations made by the AP at its last meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii in June 2012.

3. Update on roles and responsibilities of the AP:

Ilaoa shared the Council's mandate for the AP and reiterated the Council's message to the AP that they are the Council's eyes and ears in the community, and they need to be continually working on communicating the concerns of the community to the Council, and the Council's message to the community.

4. Update on American Samoa fishermen database

Tuisamoa and Ilaoa shared that they have compiled a working list of names and contact numbers/emails for a fishermen's database. Ilaoa asked that all AP members email their contact lists to him so he can compile them in a single database and share it out to the members and Council family to be used as a resource for improving communication and transparency in American Samoa.

Sword commented that this database is an important tool for the Council family to have and suggested that the AP send emails out to the various groups (Pago Pago Game Fishing Association for example) and let the organization heads get organized and compile and send in lists of their memberships. For reef fishermen, he suggested the AP involve the village councils, and get pule nu'u (village mayors) to compile lists of village fishermen.

5. Council Issues & Action Items

A. Revision of AS longline swordfish catch limit

Ilao presented information sent by Council staff looking at observer catch data and log book records for swordfish and the Council's proposed action on the swordfish catch limit. The AP was in favor of having a 10 swordfish per trip limit.

B. Review of minimum 100m Hook-depth for AS longline fishery

Ilaoa also shared information from Council staff regarding the evaluation of gear modification for American Samoa longliners that the Council make take action on at its 157th meeting in June 2013.

The AP discussed this topic and asked why the American Samoa limit is so low for certain sea turtle species. Ilaoa responded that Council staff would be revisiting these numbers and provided additional information that Paul Dalzell provided to him. The AP also wondered what Hawaii's limits were for interactions and if American Samoa could recommend a higher limit for them. Sword stressed the need to focus on the importance of jobs in the fishing industry, and that if the fisheries shut down because of turtle interactions, many people in American Samoa will suffer.

C. Annual Catch Limits

Ilaoa presented information on Annual Catch Limits provided by the Council staff related to Annual Catch Limits (ACLs). The AP was mainly interested to learn more about moving the ACLs to a model-based system and away from an average weight based system.

The AP was concerned with how exceeding ACLs in one area affected American Samoa. They were also concerned with which species were exceeded to determine its cause.

D. Development activities in Tutuila & Manu'a

Faasili provided an update on the Council's fishery development activities in American Samoa. He reported that the fish market evaluation has been suspended since 2011 due to complications. He said that they the Council had satisfied policies and the next step is determining the design of the fish market. Faasili also reported on the completion of two fishermen facilities on Ofu (fuel storage) and Tau (ice making). He noted that the fuel storage project included providing four 500-gallon tanks for fuel. The ice making project included two ice machines. The project was aided by the Council but completed and currently being run by local fishermen. He also reported that the boat ramp at Lion's Park in Tafuna and the one in Fagaalu were completed and dedicated prior to the last Council Meeting. Faasili stressed the importance of the American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) being the blueprint for fishery development in American Samoa.

The AP provided ideas on consultation resources for the project. Faasili shared that he has been consulting with some of those same resources.

The AP also said that agreements need to be put in place between fishermen and store/restaurant owners for the project to be successful. The AP agreed that there needed to be regulations on the sale of fish at the market as well. One AP members suggested that there needed to be a mechanism to cut down the extraneous selling of fish (i.e. a license). Another member stressed the need for policies to organize the market and be the place to sell fish.

The AP discussed a potential training program for fishermen in American Samoa and discussed possible ideas and participation. The AP agreed that there was a need for a training program. They also discussed the MCP and suggested that funds from fines be provided directly to the American Samoa government.

6. AS Advisory Panel Issues

The AP members discussed the issues in the American Samoa fisheries and provided information and additional discussion on the following issues.

A. Dock Issues in Pago Harbor

Tuisamoa shared that DMWR approved and put out to bid the contract to rebuild floating dock by McDonalds in Pago Pago. Poysky said that there is room on the main dock and there are many ways to improve the dock to accommodate boats by extending existing docks or tethering boats. Sword suggested that the docks be built onto the DMWR maria dock. Langkilde asked if the area near marine railway could be utilized. The AP agreed that the Council should suggest this area as a possible dock development site.

B. Incentive program for local fishermen to promote fishing and provision of catch data

The AP discussed providing incentives for fishermen to promote data collection. Some AP members questioned the need to do so as the data benefits fishermen. Sword noted that it was important to fill in the data gaps, particularly the data from reef fish, as the data is incomplete. Incentives was one idea being discussed as a way to fill the gaps, Sword said. Ilaoa reminded the AP that their discussion on the fishermen database would assist in facilitating the process.

C. Equipment store at Fagatogo marketplace

The AP noted the need for a fishing supply store at the Fagatogo marketplace. Sword recommended the drafting of an RFP for local vendors and to assist the government with setting up a lease for the space. Poysky warned that American Samoa doesn't have a large enough fleet to support a need for this. He noted that a business owner would end up going out of business and suffering large losses. Langkilde said it's too expensive, and that fishermen need to just bring fish to the market and sell what they catch there until the fleet increases. Sword replied that this is the reason why American Samoa needs a boat for Manua that can flash freeze and transport fish from Manua to Pago harbor.

D. Fishing Issues at Aunuu with new Sanctuary regulations

The AP members reported that main issues with the sanctuary regulations were that there is confusing information from the Sanctuary regarding whether or not fishing is allowed in Sanctuary waters. They also said that there is no available Sanctuary staff to gain permission for fishing and that there are unfulfilled promises by the Sanctuary to Aunuu residents.

The AP discussed the need for the Sanctuary to allow fishing within the waters around Aunuu and the Council should ask for clarification on the sanctuary regulations.

E. Potential Training Opportunities for AP members

Tuisamoa said that there's a need for more stringent attendance requirements for AP membership and consequences for missing meetings and obligations. Langkilde replied that participation depends on the island coordinator and level of coordination efforts to keep members involved. Poysky stressed the need to have knowledgeable, motivated individuals to be a good AP representative. The AP agreed that membership and policies for the AP needed to be reviewed by the Council.

F. Potential funding sources to assist local small fishing boat owners

Faasili shared that he is working on a project to establish a new fishing boat program to serve American Samoa boat owners. He said that he is developing a fishermen lending scheme to finance fishermen to assist in buying vessels and resources. He is currently investigating sources of funding for this project.

Sword asked if there is a sketch or concept of a fishing boat to mass produce for fishermen and noted that there are people that want to manufacture a line of super alia (48 ft design) and they are looking for a design concept. Poysky noted that its not possible to build a vessel of that size for under \$300,000 and that endeavor would be too costly for most local fishermen. He also said that a vessel that size would need flash freeze capability. The AP agreed that this concept should be further explored and that the design could be used by other fishermen in the region.

G. Outreach to Aunu'u fishermen

This agenda item was intended to share the AP's discussions with Aunu'u fishermen. However, due to the weather, the AP members with the information was unable to attend.

7. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Discussion and AP Recommendation to Council

In regards to AP roles and responsibilities, the AP:

1. Recommended the Council review the AP membership to include new policies with strict attendance measures and that new, motivated and informed members be appointed to the AP as appropriate.

In regards to American Samoa fisheries, the AP:

2. Recommended the Council discuss with USCG and other federal regulatory agencies regarding the ability to provide future fines against boat owners and operators to the American Samoa Government for capital improvements and infrastructure development.

3. Recommended the Council inquire with the American Samoa Government regarding the plans for the Fagatogo market and if it includes space for a fishing supply store.
4. Recommended the Council assist the American Samoa Government, through its fishery development program, in its efforts to alleviate docking space issues and provide the marine railway area as a potential site.
5. Recommended the Council establish a training program for fishermen in the territory.
6. Recommended the Council request DMWR to develop regulations pertaining to the sale of fish at the Fagatogo market.

In regards to the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, the AP:

7. Recommended the Council request the National Marine Sanctuaries Program to clarify its regulations for fishing in the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa and retract any misleading advertisements.
8. Recommended the Council request the National Marine Sanctuaries Program to provide control of the sanctuary area around Aunu'u to the DMWR to allow fishing to continue unhindered.

In regards to protected species, the AP:

9. Recommended the Council request NMFS provide a differentiation between endangered/threatened populations of corals in one area and non-endangered/threatened populations of the same coral in other areas. This is to avoid territories being penalized even though populations may be healthy in their waters.
10. Recommended the Council request NMFS to provide additional classification and identification of the proposed corals to be listed under the ESA to ensure that the right species are identified and that a proper public hearing are held. This will lead to a properly informed public that will be able to provide comments that reflect the public opinion.

In regards to pelagic fisheries, the AP:

11. Recommended the Council adopt a 10 swordfish per trip limit be for the American Samoa longline fishery.
12. Recommended the Council engage Guam and CNMI as regional partners to obtain a super alia concept that be produced locally.