



Report of the Mariana Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

March 10, 2015

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Location: Teleconference and Webconference

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. Mariana Time and the following members were present:

CNMI: Juan Diego Blanco, Joaquin Villagomez, Frank Aldan, Manny Ramon, Floyd Masga, Mike Fleming, Juan Diego Tenorio, Ray Tebuteb, Cecilio Raiukiulipiy, and Richard Farrell.

Guam: Peter Perez, Judith Guthertz, Robert Cabreza, Alan Ainbinder, Stephen Meno, Ken Borja, James Borja, Ray F., Felix Reyes,

Council: Rebecca Walker, Chris Hawkins, Mark Mitsuyasu, Eric Kingma, Joshua DeMello, Jack Ogumoro, and Carl Delacruz.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

3. New Advisory Panel Structure and Process

DeMello reviewed the new Advisory Panel (AP) structure and noted the new process of developing solutions prior to requesting assistance from the Council.

Comments from CNMI AP members included requests for more meetings in the islands of Rota and Tinian. They stressed the need for cultural sensitivity regarding meeting face to face with the community. Council staff noted that the Council has held meetings in Rota and Tinian through in-person and by video conference, both of which did not have attendance beyond AP meetings. Through the restructuring of the AP and the process, these problems could be alleviated by having the members in these island areas hold more meetings with their community (with the Council's assistance if needed) and report back to the larger group and its regular meetings.

Members also noted that there may be problems with internet connections for webconferencing as well as the need for AP Chairs to be at the meetings in person.

4. Meeting Expectations and Overview

DeMello noted that the meeting was structured to review the broader issues brought up by the AP and expected that solutions could be developed to assist in addressing these issues.

5. Issues to be discussed at 162nd Council Meeting

A. Upcoming Council Action Items

i. Recommendations on Territory Longline Bigeye Specification

Kingma presented options for specifying territorial longline bigeye quota transfers. The AP was interested in the arrangements for CNMI and the possibility for arrangements in Guam. Kingma reviewed the process for signing an agreement as well as the disposition of funds received in the agreement. Questions about the agreement including such things as training were also raised and Kingma noted that those options should be discussed with the CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resources as they negotiate any future agreements.

He also noted that there is no agreement with Guam, but it can be done if the Territory of Guam was interested. If that is the case, the Council would be willing to assist in facilitating the discussion with the Hawaii fishermen.

The Advisory Panel supported the establishment of territory limits recognizing that fishery development funding is important to the territories and commonwealth.

ii. Report on FEP Review

Hawkins presented the efforts of the Council in reviewing its Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs). He reported on the meetings and reviews conducted with the Council Family and the general categories of issues to be addressed with a future revision. Hawkins also presented the proposed plan for revising the FEP.

The AP noted the aggressive timeline and requested that they be abreast of the review.

B. Issues Relevant to the FEP AP

DeMello presented on issues that are on the agenda for the 162nd Council Meeting that may be relevant to the AP, including updates on data collection projects, community activities, and education and outreach initiatives. He noted that the data collection projects are coming from previous requests from the AP and Council to improve the data for more accurate Annual Catch Limit estimation. He also reported that the Council has initiated a project with Guam to look at fishing conflicts between local and foreign fishermen, an issue that was raised by the Advisory Panel last year. In regards to education and outreach, DeMello noted that lunar calendars have been developed and presented on the opportunities for students through the Council's Fisheries Internship (FISH) and Student Help project and Scholarship Program.

AP members showed interest in the Council's FISH project and scholarship program noting that there are students in CNMI that attend two year programs at Northern Mariana College and many Guam students that attend schools off-island.

6. Mariana Archipelago FEP Issues AP Chair

A. Island Fisheries Subpanel

i. Military Issues (Prepositioning ship coral damage, FDM bombing and mitigation)

The CNMI AP noted that there are issues with the military that the fishing community is concerned with. One issue is with possible damage to the coral reefs from the anchoring of the U.S. Department of Defense Prepositioning Ships. Council staff directed them to a report in their briefing materials on an assessment for placement that was done in the area. The AP suggested that mooring buoys be placed there and an assessment on the damage done to the reefs be conducted.

The second issue that the CNMI AP brought up was regarding the loss of fishing grounds, and possible mitigation for that loss, around Farallon de Mendanilla and Tinian. The closure of areas around these islands, as well as any possible damages to the reefs (or left over ordinance), have an impact on the fishermen of the CNMI.

Solutions to these issues were to assist the CNMI AP in initiating a discussion and developing a relationship with the local liaisons for the U.S. military. Staff noted that the EIS being developed should address the impacts to fishermen of the closure and that the AP needs to be proactive in providing comments on the EIS. *CNMI AP Chair, Richard Farrell, suggested getting in touch with General Wheldon and will coordinate the CNMI AP on providing comments on the EIS and developing the relationship with the U.S. military.*

ii. Safety at Sea Issues (Guam Agat Marina, Enforcement)

The Guam AP was concerned with the increasing interaction between boaters and the lack of understanding of boating etiquette, safety, and rules. They noted that fishermen are tying to buoys, fishing in the channels, and the lack of lights on the channel markers. The AP was also interested in the plans for the marinas in Guam and suggested that an increased presence by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and additional outreach on boating safety and rules would be helpful.

The Guam AP would like to be able to provide this type of information to boaters and local fishermen and the AP Chair planned to invite the Port Authority Director to provide the AP with the plans for the Marina and to work with the USCG on outreach materials and presence.

iii. Shark Interactions in Guam

Council staff noted the Guam AP's concerns with shark depredation on Guam. They noted that *the Council is still seeking funding opportunities for potential cooperative research projects and invited the AP to assist on projects and proposals.*

iv. Sportsfish Funding Issues

The Guam AP was concerned about the use of Sportsfish Funding by the Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources. Council Staff offered assistance to request DAWR or the US Fish and Wildlife Service to present on the Guam sportsfish projects and funding at a future meeting.

B. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

Pelagic discussions were provided under the territorial BET agenda item.

C. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

i. Runoff into the lagoon (sewer)

The CNMI AP was concerned with possible runoff (from construction, garbage, etc.) that may be entering the lagoon and affecting the fisheries. They were interested in the laws and how pollution is mitigated by construction projects. Council staff noted that there are permitting authorities within the local government and that if there are suspicions of permit violations, citizens are able to document these violations and provide it to the agency. *Staff also agreed to assist the CNMI AP Chair in requesting a presentation to the AP on these issues from the appropriate local government agencies.*

D. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

i. Guam Access Issues (boat ramps, public access)

One of the more contentious issues for fishermen in Guam has been the discouraging of public access to the shoreline. The Guam AP noted that signs to public access is covered or parking is not provided near the access. Council Staff noted that meetings were held in Guam in previous years regarding access and suggested engaging the Mayor of Tumon-Tamuning-Harmon on these issues. *The Guam AP Chair, Peter Perez, agreed to work on this issue with the AP and the Council Staff offered assistance to request presentations from the appropriate agencies on local access laws.*

ii. Guam Traditional Fishing Practices and Education

The Guam AP reported that they would like to receive assistance in helping to find someone to develop curriculum off of the Traditional Fishing Practices work done by Judith Guthertz. The Guam indigenous fishing rights law may be incorporating this type of curriculum into its execution and the Guam AP would like to assist in this effort. Council Staff suggested the AP discuss this issue with the Council's Communications Officer to determine how curriculum development may best move forward.

iii. Guam Southern EEZ Boundary

The Guam AP was concerned with the change in Guam's southern EEZ boundary without notification to the citizens of Guam. Council staff noted that a letter was sent to the Department of State and a response was expected from the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Division.

8. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Recommendations to the Council

The following recommendation was made to the Council:

- *The Mariana AP supported the establishment of territory limits recognizing that fishery development funding is important to the territories and commonwealth*

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m. Mariana Time.