



Mariana Archipelago FEP-CNMI Advisory Panel Meeting Report

June 7, 2017

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

DLNR Conference Room

Saipan, CNMI

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Richard Farrell called the CNMI Advisory Panel (AP) meeting to order at 6:15p.m. Members in attendance were Ray Tebuteb, Floyd Masga, Manny Ramon, and Lawrence Concepcion.

Also in attendance were John Gourley (CNMI Council Member) and Ray Roberto (Council Member-designee), as well as Michael Tenorio (Council SSC member, CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife), Gene Weaver (Council Non-commercial Fishery Advisory Committee) and Jack Ogumoro (Council CNMI Island Coordinator).

2. Report on Council Action Items

The Council's CNMI Island Coordinator provided the AP with a status of the recommendations made at the last Council meeting. These recommendations included those discussed by the AP at its last meeting in March 2017 and included recommendations on impacts to fishing from pre-positioned ships, the CNMI Marine Conservation Plan (MCP), and impacts to fisheries from military activities.

3. Council Issues

A. CNMI Marine Conservation Plan

Council Coordinator indicated that several meetings were conducted on Saipan, Tinian and Rota to solicit comments from the community about the type of projects they want funded under the MCP. The three year document will be expiring in August and projects identified by the communities on all three islands and are will be included in the new plan.

He indicated most of the projects mentioned by the participants during the meetings were already included or covered in the current MCP. He said some of the comments had to do with prioritizing the projects, including FADS from being a medium priority to a high priority.

He said the plan will be submitted to the Governor for his signature, and then forwarded to the Council to approve at their 170th meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. Since the members would like to review it carefully, they agreed to submit their comments right away so the plan would not be delayed.

B. Options for FEP MUS for Ecosystem Component Designation

This topic was not discussed as the analysis for the options was ongoing. The Council Coordinator noted that a presentation would be available to the AP at its meeting prior to the Council's meeting in October.

C. Review of Options for Non-fishing Impacts to EFH

A presentation on the review of options for non-fishing impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) was presented on behalf of Council Staff. The presenter said the Council is looking to remove harbors and other developed areas from EFH, as these have been basically pre-disturbed areas. He said the Council wants to look at options and the members will have more opportunity in the future to learn more about this issue and to provide comments when Council staff begins to discuss it in preparation for the October meetings.

4. Mariana FEP Community Activities

The Council coordinator presented on several community activities, including the CNMI Department of Land and Natural Resource's MCP review committee meeting which the members recommended five community projects to be funded under the MCP; the public meetings held on Saipan, Tinian and Rota to solicit comments from the community about the types of projects they want funded under the new plan being developed to replace the existing plan that will be expiring in August; and the involvement of the coordinator in the recently concluded Marianas Trench Seafood and Fishing Festival.

5. Mariana FEP-CNMI AP Issues

A. Report of the Subpanels

i. Island Fisheries Subpanel

An AP member reported on the fish market in Tinian. He said it would be opening soon and they need several items such as ice machine and meat dryer.

ii. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

An AP member reported on the fishing derbies held on Saipan, Tinian, and then Rota. He also mentioned it was very difficult to get a hold of someone at the CNMI Department of Public Safety as he wanted to show officers the sites where there are unexploded ordinance so they can remove them. If they can't, then they need to contact the Navy Explosive Ordinance Disposal Team for support.

iii. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

An AP member reported on the need to have more restrooms at picnic sites so people can use the restrooms instead of relieving themselves in the ocean.

iv. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

An AP member reported that during an informal meeting of the AP indigenous fishing rights sub-panels, Council staff asked who the CNMI government considers indigenous and what are the indigenous fishing practices. After further deliberation, it was recommended they steer away from making it a racial issue that would put it in conflict with the Equal Rights amendments. The AP chair offered to find someone who can help with this issue.

B. Other Issues

Council Coordinator informed the members about the Boat/trailer Parking Lot Project at the Fishing Base area. He said the project will begin in about two weeks and he invited the members to attend the ground breaking ceremony scheduled at 2:00 p.m., June 9, 2017.

The Chair also reminded the members about submitting issues for the AP Plan for 2017 to 2018.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The CNMI AP recommends the Council:

- **Work with CNMI DLNR to include the CNMI AP in the discussions regarding the improvements being proposed for the Garapan Fishing Base.**

8. Other Business

The members discussed the need for additional time to review and submit comments on the new MCP being developed. They agreed to provide their comments to the coordinator prior to its submission to the Council for review.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.