



Mariana Archipelago FEP-GUAM Advisory Panel Meeting

Friday, May 26, 2017

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association Lanai

Hagatna, Guam

1. "Hafa Adai" - Welcome and Introductions

Felix Reyes, Guam Advisory Panel (AP) member, filled in for the Guam AP Chair (who was available by teleconference) at the meeting and opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m. In attendance were Guam AP members: Jesse Rosario, Peter Perez, James Borja, Stephen Meno, Jason Miller, Tom Camacho, Cliff Kyota, and Judi Guthertz (Overall AP Chair).

Also in attendance was Michael Duenas (Council Member), Carl Delacruz (Council's Guam Island Coordinator), Joe Mafnas (Forestry Division, Guam Department of Agriculture), and Judith Amesbury.

Michael Duenas, Guam Council Member, provided opening remarks to the Guam AP speaking about the recent Council Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting of the eight fishery management councils in Maine. He explained that international negotiations were something of an issue for everyone and said that many items that were relative to this meeting were discussed. He also briefed the AP on what is going on with the marine national monuments.

An AP member asked Duenas if he knew if there have been agreements to monitor international fisheries between countries and if many countries have signed on to participate. Duenas replied that there are no compliance and accountability measures to control the countries that sign onto an agreement but then turn-off their GPS. The problem is a lack of enforcement and when asked about providing more funds to the US Coast Guard to patrol, it was answered that they do not get additional funds.

Another AP member asked what US negotiators are doing to help support US fishermen. Duenas said that the negotiators are not helping and that the CCC sent a letter to the State Department suggesting putting a strong supporter of fishermen and the fishing industry on the negotiation team to fight for US fishermen.

2. Report on Previous Council Action Items

The Council's Guam Island Coordinator provided a report on the 169th Council Meeting action items and provided a status update. One recommendation was for the Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) to present a report to the public on the status of the marine preserves on Guam.

An AP member noted that when it comes time for the DAWR presentation, the presentation should be done at the village level. The AP agreed and noted they would discuss this with the DAWR.

3. Council Issues

A. Guam Marine Conservation Plan

The Guam AP was provided a report on the status and timeline of the Guam Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) and its current projects. The AP commented how appreciative they were of the addition of projects as suggested by the community.

B. Options for FEP MUS for Ecosystem Component Designation

The Guam AP was provided a presentation on the ecosystem component designation options that the Council will look into at a future meeting. It was noted that the designation of ecosystem component species in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) would provide the Council with the ability to reduce the number of Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) needed but at the same time provide for continued monitoring and management. The analysis on how to group the Management Unit Species (MUS) is ongoing and should be ready by the Council's meeting in October, at which time the full analysis will be provided to the AP for its consideration.

C. Options for Non-fishing Impacts to EFH

The Guam AP was also provided a report on options for addressing non-fishing impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Currently, EFH reviews are done on any Federal action (or Federally-funded action) that may impact the habitat as described in the FEPs. Options are being developed by the Council to determine the necessity of reviewing non-fishing impacts to EFH. Non-fishing impacts such as dredging, harbor maintenance, etc., also require EFH reviews though these places, while designated as EFH, may not actually be "essential" to fish because of the nature of their location (i.e. high traffic, pollution, etc.). Council staff is currently working on developing options and analyzing impacts and will present these to the Council at its October meeting. Prior to that, the AP will have a chance at providing its comments on the options as well.

D. Research Priorities

The Guam Island Coordinator provided copies of the Council's cooperative research and five-year research priorities for the AP to review. He noted that these priorities are reviewed annually and solicited the group for additions, removals or changes to any of the priorities.

4. Mariana FEP Community Activities

The Guam AP was provided an update on the Council's activities in Guam, including data collection projects, a market report, and community-based management initiatives.

An AP member provided a report on a club-based spearfishing project that is collecting non-commercial spearfishing data from its members under the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). The Marianas Underwater Fishing Federation is taking the lead on this project because they noted that while they are trying hard to legitimize spearfishing as a sport, there are many others who are pillaging the resources by spearing fish that are too small or taking more than what is needed. Their assistance to provide data on spearfishing catch and effort in Guam has resulted in the development of a website/mobile app site where data is entered voluntarily by participants. He noted an abundance of spearfishermen who are fishing and keeping fish for food, according to the data.

The Guam Island Coordinator provided an update on the Territorial Science Initiative (TSI) project collecting data from seafood markets and a seafood vendor forum that was held to provide information on the project and fishery issues. He also provided an update on the community-based management plans for Malesso and Yigo and how the Council is assisting those villages. He also noted that Senator Wil Castro is working with the village of Umatac on a proposed community-management plan for that village as well.

5. Mariana FEP-Guam AP Issues

A. Report of the Subpanels

i. Island Fisheries Subpanel

AP members presented issues to the AP relating to Island Fisheries. An AP member noted that Guam has a Fishery Council that was created last year but has yet to meet. They tasked AP member Jesse Rosario, a senate-confirmed member of this Council and its designated Chairman, to keep track of the progress of this Council.

Another member reported on the recreational fisheries meeting held in Honolulu and said there was a good level of discussion and said his number one recommendation was for outreach and communication between NOAA and the fishing community. He said that Guam talked about their issues and challenges with marine protected areas. Another member added that the fishermen on Guam feel that NOAA can't be trusted so the intent of the meeting was to help build a better relationship between fishermen and NOAA. Other members replied that the relationship was damaged because when NOAA personnel comes to Guam and convinces their government to do something that does not provide local benefits, the trust is broken. One member asked if NOAA ever set a dollar value of what constitutes a commercial fisherman. He said that the USDA set a \$1000 threshold for annual sales to be constituted as commercial producer which makes it easy to determine who is commercial. The presenting member said it wasn't discussed.

An AP member provided details of the meeting he attended of the presentation of a NOAA research ship doing reef transect studies. He said it is three-years of research (2014-2017) done only in the month of May with nothing for the rest of the year. He said that NOAA reported in the presentation that the biomass in the Guam marine preserves is just about as close to the biomass and variety of fish in the northern islands such as Saipan and Aguihan. He said the findings outside the preserves regarding biomass show that there is an abundant mass of size of fish but never said anything regarding spillover.

ii. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

AP members were still concerned with Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) in Guam and the lack of maintenance and deployment. They understand the problems and continue to monitor this issue even though it is a persistent annual issue.

iii. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

One AP member noted that the Guam 4H Club is marking its 30th anniversary with several events including a possible two-week high school program to expose students to fisheries.

The Guam Island Coordinator reported that in Manell-Geus there has been a large algal bloom along the reef margin of Malessa that is smothering the reef and creating a danger to boats as algae gets stuck on the propellers or boat inlets. The AP suggested engaging volunteers, friends, and government/non-governmental groups to physically remove the algae. They suggested that the village explore the use of the algae as fertilizer or mulch. They said that they should dialogue with the Department of Agriculture to communicate with farmers as well; Guam has a compost facility so there may be an opportunity or even market for the algae as fertilizer. They also suggested a study to see if the algae are a viable bio-fuel source.

iv. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

The AP continues to be concerned with a Guam indigenous rights bill that was passed and the lack of progress, but there were no updates.

B. Guam AP Project Updates

The Guam AP committed to working with the Guam Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division to assist in the planting of trees to help reduce erosion and improve watersheds in Guam. Joe Mafnas provided the AP with a presentation on the continued burning of the south's hillsides, including the burning of Acacia trees planted many years ago. He said up to 70,000 trees were planted and due to burning, are down to nearly 30,000. He made a suggestion to muster volunteers to plant another 30-40,000 along the slopes. The Guam AP is to work on planting trees based on the sites recommended by Mafnas as an aspect of "ridge to reef." The AP is willing to provide a helping hand to physically plant and also to involve the nearest community to help. The AP will create ideas to engage the community in the tree planting and get back to Mafnas to develop a schedule for the activity.

Another project that the Guam AP is committed to working on is to reduce marine debris and discarded fishing line. AP members provided an update on a project to install disposal tubes for discarded fishing lines at each of the major marinas. Some members suggested providing larger trash bins instead but many AP members opposed this thought as folks will start dumping domestic trash and other junk in them.

6. Public Comment

Joe Mafnas provided the AP with details regarding an opportunity for Guam fisheries. He said a US Coast Guard ship is ready to be released for donation to the Guam government in early June.

An AP member said that enforcement agencies should take advantage of the opportunity and mentioned that local Coast Guard Auxiliary could also use the vessel. Others noted the possible use of the vessel as a research platform, FAD deployments, towing, etc. The Guam AP suggested a letter or some sort of recommendation to the governor to recognize the opportunity of owning the Ship.

Judy Amesbury noted that the Guam Museum, in collaboration with the Smithsonian and the Guam Humanities Council, is putting up a display with the theme of "Water." Amesbury said she is working on the fishing portion of the display and it should be ready for viewing in the fall of this year.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The Guam Advisory Panel recommended the Council:

Regarding Guam fishery issues

- Request DAWR enforcement review and revisit all policies including the local non-commercial sale of octopus and consider using community service at the harbors and marinas as a penalty for illegal fishing.

Regarding enforcement issues

- Request USCG Guam Sector to work with the AP to coordinate training of Guam residents on the operation of large vessels.
- Request USCG to start dialogue with the Governor of Guam over the interest of the USCG vessel for the local station and the auxiliary.

8. “At the End of the Day” - Other Business

The Guam AP discussed other business including:

- Looking into developing a “fishery section” in the POST newspaper where fishery news, meetings, schedule of events and fishery topics such as coop building progress, AP meetings, etc. can be posted.
- Inviting other fisheries agencies to attend its meetings. They suggested including the Guam Police Department’s Marine Patrol to discuss those boats designated specifically to supply fish markets around the island or other agency folks that could provide support.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.