



Report of the American Samoa Archipelago FEP Advisory Panel Meeting

March 13, 2015

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Teleconference and Webconference

1. Welcome and Introductions

The American Samoa Advisory Panel (AP) meeting opened at 4:15 p.m. and the following AP members participated: Michael Crook, Nathan Sagapolutele, Mac Aveina, Krista Corry, Nonu Tuisamoa, Brian Thompson, Christinna Sanchez, Isaiah Hunkin, and Ray Tulafono.

Council Staff participating were Joshua DeMello, Nate Iloa (American Samoa Island Coordinator), Eric Kingma, and Mark Mitsuyasu.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda

No changes to the agenda.

3. New Advisory Panel Structure and Process

DeMello provided an overview of the 2015-2018 AP term expectations and explained how the AP structure differs from previous years. He noted that the Council would like the AP to be the “boots on the ground” to do the heavy lifting on the issues until the Council action is needed. He also noted the AP’s suggestion to have regular meetings of the subpanels and for the subpanels to report back to the larger AP. Council Staff discussed this issue with all of the AP Chairs, who were tasked with assisting in scheduling regular meetings.

4. Meeting Expectations and Overview

DeMello provided meeting expectations and noted that the meeting is set up to discuss the issues and develop solutions.

5. Issues to be discussed at 162nd Council Meeting

A. Upcoming Council Action Items

i. Recommendations on the American Samoa

Large Vessel Prohibited Area Temporary Exemption

Kingma presented on the issue regarding the LVPA and noted that the regulation was established in 2002. He provided the alternatives that the Council will be looking at in its meeting and solicited a recommendation from the AP.

The AP asked for an explanation of the SSC’s recommendation regarding no sunset clause. Kingma responded that the SSC felt that a one or three year sunset clause would not provide an adequate amount of time to assess the impact or provide relief to the fishery participants.

The AP also asked whether data was available for the two alia vessels that are utilizing longline permits. Kingma replied that there is data but is not available for viewing due to confidentiality rules.

**ii. Recommendations on American Samoa Longline EEZ
Albacore Catch Limit**

Kingma also presented on an issue of albacore catch limits for the longline fishery of American Samoa. He noted that this comes from the Forum Fisheries Agency Tokelau Arrangement which provide countries with potential benefits such as cooperative allocation, zone schemes, etc, and said that American Samoa, although not part of the FFA, is allowed to participate in the arrangement. Kingma said that it is important to pay attention to the international management of the fisheries because the South Pacific albacore fishery has been ignored and that there is a need to get a handle on the stock. He also noted that the concern comes from some countries rapidly increasing harvest and capacity over the past few years. He provided alternatives for the AP to consider for recommendations to the Council, including a catch limit and whether or not to initiate status with the FFA.

iii. Recommendations on Territory Longline Bigeye Specification

Kingma reported on the specification for territory longline bigeye limit arrangements. He reviewed American Samoa's participation in existing agreements and noted the fishery development projects that came about from this arrangement. He solicited the AP's advice on recommendations to the Council on which alternative the AP would be agreeable to for this issue.

The AP wondered how American Samoa got included in the SIDS and Territories catch limit. They noted that there is no limit under the WCPFC, so how did American Samoa get a limit of 2000 metric tons? Kingma responded that without a limit for the territories, there needed to be a limit for the transfer of limits under Amendment 7.

iv. Report on FEP Review

DeMello presented a progress report on the review of the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plans and noted the participation of the AP in the process. He noted that there are activities and issues that the Council Staff can address and laid out the plan to address these issues in the next couple of years.

B. Issues Relevant to the FEP AP

Ilaoa provided an update on Council-sponsored projects for data collection, fisheries development, and education and outreach in American Samoa. These types of projects, Council Staff noted, should also include AP participation and the AP will be approached for participation in the future.

6. American Samoa Archipelago FEP Issues

A. Island Fisheries Subpanel

AP discussed the need for catch size limits, which originated from fishermen noting the small fishes being caught and sold. *The AP discussed developing an education and outreach on fisheries information and roles of the agencies.*

AP also was concerned that the ACLs are for the stock but do not apply in territorial waters. They would like to find out more of what is needed to discuss the collaboration on ACLs with

the territory. *The Council Staff agreed to provide more information on the ACLs for American Samoa.*

The AP was concerned with the effectiveness of the NMSAS. It was suggested that AP members engage the NMSAS on their research and monitoring plan and one way to do this is to apply for the Sanctuary Advisory Council. The AP is very concerned that the promises made by NMSAS and urged the Council to request DMWR to provide assistance. *Council Staff agreed to request NMSAS staff to present to the AP at a future meeting on updates for the NMSAS.*

The AP was concerned about the American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan process and suggested that there be a review of the MCP that is transparent and inclusive of all stakeholders, including the AP. *The AP recommended the Council request DMWR to include AP, or use AP meetings, as a forum for the MCP revision discussions.*

B. Pelagic Fisheries Subpanel

In regards to the LVPA issue, the AP noted that there was limited use of the area and that if the area can be opened to provide economical relief to the larger boats, it should be done, especially with a sanctuary and a monuments closing areas in American Samoa. AP members said that the Alia's aren't fishing right now and that most are weekend warriors that are not as dependent on fishing as much as the longline boats. They also said that providing access to the longline boats would provide an opportunity for data collection as well. They would also like to see the comment letters from other groups on this issue. *The AP recommended the Council select alternative 4 (a 12 mile closure) and to not include a sunset. Further, they requested the Council conduct this under emergency action*

Regarding the American Samoa Longline EEZ Albacore Catch Limit, the AP was supportive of exploring the inclusion of American Samoa in the Tokelau Agreement and noted that "Associate Participation" (observer status) must be representative of actual participation targeting SPALB (i.e. U.S. LL/AS fishery). *The AP recommended the Council proceed with initiating an EEZ-based limit for South Pacific Albacore of approximately 6,000 mt for American Samoa.*

The AP discussed the Territorial Bigeye specification issues and was supportive of the idea of transferrable quotas to benefit American Samoa. *The AP recommended the Council support a BET catch limit of 2,000 mt, with 1,000 mt transferrable.*

C. Ecosystems and Habitat Subpanel

Encourage accuracy of data collection for better management (recreational and bottomfish ie); not confident in the current reporting programs (incomplete data) and people need to be held accountable;

D. Indigenous Fishing Rights Subpanel

Support inshore/traditional/indigenous community-based projects initiated and managed by villages; Would like to see a village MPA that allows fishing to residents outside of the village; Can add to the MCP to take advantage of potential funding; look at initiating discussions with DMWR

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9. Recommendations to the Council

The American Samoa Advisory Panel provided the following recommendations:

- *The American Samoa AP recommended the Council select alternative 4 (a 12 mile closure) and to not include a sunset. Further, they requested the Council conduct this under emergency action.*
- *The American Samoa AP recommended the Council proceed with initiating an EEZ-based limit for South Pacific Albacore of approximately 6,000 mt for American Samoa, and supported the inclusion of American Samoa in the Tokelau Agreement.*
- *The American Samoa AP recommended the Council support a BET catch limit of 2,000 mt, with 1,000 mt transferrable.*
- *The American Samoa Advisory Panel recommended the Council request DMWR to include AP, or use AP meetings, as a forum for the MCP revision discussions.*

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.