



Report of the Mariana Archipelago FEP-Guam Advisory Panel Meeting

September 22, 2017

5:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Guam Hilton. Tumon, Guam

1. Welcome and Introductions

Guam Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, Felix Reyes, opened the meeting and asked for introductions. AP members in attendance included: Ken Borja, William Bradford, Roberto Cabreza, Judith Guthertz (overall AP Chair), Cliff Kyota, Stephen Meno, Jason Miller, Matthew Orot, Peter Perez, and Jesse Rosario.

Also in attendance was Michael Duenas (Council Member), Joshua DeMello and Charles Kaaiai (Council staff), Judy Amesbury (CDPP AP member), Christine Laurent (Council contractor), Carl Delacruz (Council's Guam Island Coordinator) and Eric Cruz (NMFS PIFSC)

Members of the public included Senator Wil Castro, Joe Mesa, Britany Toves, Jay Gutierrez, and Marie Auyong.

2. Report on Council Action Items/Previous AP Meeting

Council staff provided an update on previous AP recommendations and action items from the Council. He noted that the updates were provided by Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) staff and that formal response letters were being prepared for the Department of Agriculture to send to the Council. The following responses were provided:

- Regarding sea cucumbers, it was reported that the DAWR is looking at reducing the quota from 100 pp daily to 5 pp daily after a sea cucumber survey was completed this year;
- Regarding community service for fishing violations, DAWR staff noted that conservation officers are for this, but this is something that would have to be addressed by the Attorney General and the legislature;
- Regarding marine preserves signs and markers, DAWR staff noted that sportsfish funds cannot be used for fixing the signs so they need to look for other ways to do this.
- Regarding a permanent fisheries display at the museum, DAWR staff said they met with the museum staff and that the museum is only looking for historical, pre-contact information as the current space is very small.
- Regarding a marine preserve review, DAWR staff noted that they are doing general surveys to provide monitoring and that the University of Guam Marine Laboratory conducts species specific surveys. He said that these reports are available and that preliminary reports show that the species that do not move are protected in the marine preserves but there needs to be more studies to on currents and larval distribution to see if the preserves seed it with juveniles. He also said that the 2017 monitoring surveys were not completed due to administrative problems with completing dive physicals.

- Regarding sharks, DAWR staff said that there needs to be tagging studies done because although they know there is shark depredation of fishermen's catch, studies by NOAA have not had the same experience.

The AP appreciated the response from DAWR and still had concerns about sea cucumbers, noting that the process to reduce the quota would take some time. Members noted that Hawaii instituted a moratorium on sea cucumber harvest until a comprehensive management plan could be developed and reviewed by the public. *AP members agreed that a moratorium on sea cucumber harvest in Guam should be implemented by the Governor until the revised measures are put in place.*

3. Council Issues

a. Ecosystem Component Species Designation

Council staff presented on the Council's proposed action for designating species as ecosystem components. The objective of the action is to consolidate information for all of the management unit species and filter those species based on National Standard 1 guidelines and criteria to determine if the species is in need of federal conservation and management. He noted the process that would occur to analyze which species are in the fishery which allowed the filtering of which species are under consideration for management. He also presented options including no action, designating ecosystem component species, and removing the species from the fishery ecosystem plan (FEP).

The AP agreed that some of the species in the Council's management units should not be considered for federal conservation and management measures because they are not caught in federal waters. They also agreed that all of the species needed to continue to be monitored, so *the AP recommended that these species not be removed from the FEP and be designated as ecosystem components instead.*

b. Aquaculture Management in the Western Pacific Region

Council staff presented on establishing a regional management program for aquaculture in the Western Pacific. The purpose of the action is to develop a program that ensures environmentally sound and economically sustainable aquaculture in federal waters. He noted that there is a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that is being developed and that the options being presented are mirrored in the EIS. He reviewed the history of the action noting that the Council recommended permitting and reporting for aquaculture operations in the region in 2010, but a broader management approach was needed to determine the details of a permitting system. Staff reviewed the alternatives under consideration and noted that alternatives 2 and 3 are very similar but alternative 3 includes much stricter requirements.

After discussion about the different alternatives, the AP noted that alternative 2 was less restrictive and would encourage aquaculture development. *The AP agreed to recommend the Council select Alternative 2 as a preferred alternative.*

4. Mariana FEP-Guam Community Activities

The Guam AP Chair provided an update on the fishing community activities since the last meeting. He noted that the AP will be participating in fishing demonstrations at the Guam

Museum in October and reported on the participation and results of the fishing derbies in Guam, including the Marianas Underwater Fishing Federation (MUFF) and 4-H Kids Spearfishing Derby at Pago Bay. He noted that this was for kids 14-18 years old and that the children were mentored by more experienced divers from MUFF.

The Chair also reported that the High School Summer Course was held as well as the annual Guam International Derby in August and Saipan Derby in July. He also noted the AP's participation in the public meeting for the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement.

Laurent also provided an update on the Council's current efforts to collect commercial fishing data from the different fish markets in Guam. The idea of the project is to get greater voluntary compliance in filling out and submitting the commercial receipt logbooks to the DAWR. She noted that it has been a success with a greater amount of participation from the markets.

5. Mariana FEP-Guam Advisory Panel Issues

a. Report of the Subpanels

i. Island Fisheries

Guam AP members presented the issues in island fisheries that included gear conflicts between net fishermen and rod and reel fishermen in Agana Boat Basin. They noted that there have been issues during the *atulai* run between fishermen that resulted in public meetings being held to address the issue. As a result, the Agana Boat Basin may be used as a place of interest for marine spatial planning when the Regional Planning Body meets in October.

ii. Pelagic Fisheries

Guam AP members noted that the DAWR deployed nearly all of the fish aggregation devices and the AP participated in the deployment. They discussed the issues but noted that little could be done at this point.

iii. Ecosystems and Habitat

Guam AP members reported on plans for cleaning up fishing debris at the boat basins in Guam. They are currently building containers for discarded fishing line and plan to place two each at Agana, Agat, and Merizo. The AP members discussed the need to make sure that it is used for fishing line and not general trash and to talk to the Department of Parks and Recreation to clear out the containers of the trash. Another option proposed by the AP was to look at the Guam community, especially the business and volunteer organizations, to adopt a beach or MPA with debris removal as part of the adoption and funding to improve the signs.

iv. Indigenous Fishing Rights and Fishing Communities

Guam AP members continued to note their concerns over the lack of a boat ramp on the east side of Guam. They noted that the Guam Economic Development Authority funded a feasibility study (through the Department of the Interior) for an eastside boat ramp. Members also noted that it is part of the Marine Conservation Plan for Guam and that Yigo has also inquired about a possible boat ramp in their community as well. The AP members noted that the boat ramp is sorely needed not just for the boating community but for safety and emergency use as well.

b. Other Issues

Council staff provided information to the AP on the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant program and encouraged the members to apply. He indicated the preliminary proposal is only two pages long and is due on October 10. He further indicated the FY18 solicitation seeks proposals that fall into the following categories: Marine Aquaculture; Adapting to Environmental Changes; Promotion, Development, and Marketing; and Territorial Science. Council staff offered assistance to anyone who is interested in applying for the program.

Council staff also noted that the report by Secretary of the Department of Interior, Ryan Zinke, regarding the monument review was leaked and the Marianas Trench National Marine Monument was not included in the list of monuments to be reviewed. He said the leaked report indicated that Zinke would not be recommending any of the 27 monuments be eliminated but there will be some changes to some of them.

6. Public Comment

Senator Wil Castro provided an update on his work with the fishing community. He reviewed the public meetings he held at the legislature and dockside in Paseo and said he is continuing the discussion to work on a solution. He also noted that another issue the fishing community is dealing with is the plans for a firing range at Ritidian and he is speaking with the appropriate military officials to discuss the issues in order to properly address the public's concerns. He thanked the AP members and Council Member Duenas for their assistance in these issues. He also hoped to be able to get funding for the Guam fishing derbies as they are an important part of the culture of Guam.

7. Discussion and Recommendations

The Guam Advisory Panel made the following recommendations:

Regarding Aquaculture Management:

- The Guam AP recommended the Council select Alternative 2 as its preliminary preferred alternative as it is less restrictive.

Regarding Ecosystem Components:

- The Guam AP recommended the Council select Option 2 with the sub-option of designating those species not in need of federal conservation and management into an ecosystem components designation.

Regarding Guam Fisheries:

- The Guam AP recommended the Council request the Guam Department of Agriculture consider a moratorium on sea cucumber harvest while they are working on revising their sea cucumber management measures to provide additional safeguards on the stock. Further, the AP recommended the Council suggest the Governor of Guam to place a moratorium on sea cucumber harvest until the revised management measures are put into place.

8. Other Business

Council staff talked about the remainder of the AP term, and encouraged the members to continue working on the issues they have identified as priorities. He also indicated that staff is working with the AP Chair to determine the needs and availability of resources to assist the AP in their work.

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