



**195<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Western Pacific Regional Fishery  
Management Council  
Guam Island Report**

**Judith Guthertz**

**1. Guam Port Authority News**

The Port General Manager presented the initial draft Port Authority of Guam Master Plan to the Board of Directors on April 10, 2023. Drafted by a BSP consultant, the plan is being reviewed by the board then will undergo a public hearing process with the Guam Legislature and the Governor of Guam. The 390-page plan is comprehensive and includes supports the Governor's transshipment initiative which designates Guam and the PAG as the transshipment hub in the western Pacific region and represents 6% of total PAG container revenue. The plan also contains details of proposed portside renovations, including marinas and the Harbor of Refuge.



**2. COFA Negotiations Update**

The United States said it signed agreements with Micronesia on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, concluding negotiations to extend economic assistance to the island state under a strategic pact key to U.S. efforts to push back against China in the Pacific.

The State Department said additional negotiations were underway with the FSM to continue federal programs and services currently provided under a Federal Programs and Services Agreement.

Three agreements related to Micronesia's Compact of Free Association (COFA) with the United States were signed by the charge d'affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Pohnpei and Micronesian negotiator Leo Falcam Jr.

This marked "the successful conclusion of negotiations with FSM regarding the extension of Compact- related economic assistance" and was "a major milestone" in relations, the State Department said in a statement.

Washington first reached COFA accords with three Pacific island states - FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands - in the 1980s under which it retains responsibility for their defense and provides economic assistance while gaining exclusive access to huge strategic swathes of the Pacific in return.

Under memorandums of understanding reached on renewing the pacts, the U.S. will commit a total of \$7.1 billion over 20 years to the three nations, subject to U.S. Congressional approval.

The U.S. statement called the relationship with FSM "special and historic" and said continuation of COFA-related assistance at "significant" levels reflected this and would support development and help tackle challenges such as climate change.

Renewing the COFAs has become a key part of U.S. efforts to push back against China's bid to expand its influence in the Pacific. Chinese diplomats have been courting the region and China's construction and mining companies have expanded their business in many Pacific island nations.

On Monday, May 22, 2023, the U.S. signed a renewed COFA with Palau. Chief COFA negotiator Joseph Yun said he hoped to finalize a deal with the Marshall Islands in the coming weeks. (Source: Reuters)

## **Manny Dueñas**

1. Typhoon Mawar paid a visit to Guam with destructive winds that left the island in shambles. Hardest hit were the villages up north, including major damage to Andersen Air Force Base. Some boats at the Agaña Marina were either sunk or partially sunk. Agat Marina had one boat sunk. Two people were swept out to sea during the height of the storm. They were swimming inshore but the currents were very strong.



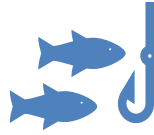
Recovery of power was quick. Water was very slow. And digital services were very bad. The National Weather Service in Guam chose to use Facebook and a local FM radio station as their platform to share storm and emergency updates with the community. Both went away as soon as the winds started hitting and the power shut down. Their Guam facility was damaged such that the Hawaii NWS had to step in to issue updates and warnings in their place. Panicked, residents waited in line for hours in lines that is sometimes two miles long, for gas. Some stations who managed to reopen were designated only for emergency vehicles. Even the village mayors had to wait in line for hours to get fuel for their chainsaws in the regular gas lines. Tourists in Tumon had to walk around fallen trees and debris for many days after the storm as there was not concerted effort to initiate clean up as politicians argue about emergency funding and procurement matters. Fortunately, FEMA representatives arrived before the storm and coordinated disaster relief for thousands of residents.

For a few weeks, fishermen stayed ashore to help with the clean-up of their families and places of work. The migrant boats were the only ones able to venture out to catch fish for their markets.

2. The Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Co-op) facility suffered total damage. Transition to a temporary facility nearby is ongoing. No expected opening date has been established yet.



Fishermen who are off the Hook!



Clyde Donato, Jr. was a good fisherman from Santa Rita. But his talent was known more for his boat building skills. He was always working on ways to improve factory designs to improve fishing ergonomics.



Frank Aquino was one of those fishermen who was always around other fishers, the marinas, and anywhere fishers gather. He developed his skills over so many years trolling and shore fishing.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase!