

# Meet Your Council Advisory Panel Leadership



From left: Clay Tam (AP chair); Nathan Ilaoa (American Samoa AP vice chair); Richard Farrell (CNMI AP vice chair); Judy Amesbury (Guam AP vice chair); Gil Kualii (Hawai'i AP vice chair).

## ***Learn about the people who bridge the gap between the community and management agencies.***

**In summer 2022**, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council sought applicants for the 2023–2026 Advisory Panel (AP) term. At its 192nd meeting in September 2022, the Council reviewed a number of applicants and selected nine members (including three alternates) for the American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam and Hawai'i APs. The Council chose members who they believed would serve as the best bridge between the fishing community and fishery managers and scientists.

The AP is one of three congressionally mandated groups created to provide advice and recommendations to the Council and ensure fisheries management is a true “bottoms-up” approach to governance. Council staff interviewed the AP chair and vice chairs to get insight into why participating in the AP is important to them.

**Clay Tam** (AP chair) is a Hawai'i-born and raised fisherman who learned how to fish from his elders. They taught him to always fish responsibly, respect our precious resources and never waste what our creator has given us. Clay is an avid fisherman, scientist and project leader. He has been involved in the nearshore, bottomfish and pelagic fisheries through fish tagging and collecting and processing fisheries data and information. He worked for many years with state and federal fisheries agencies, and now with the nonprofit Pacific Islands Fisheries Group. Clay encourages fishermen, scientists and agencies to work together to better manage our fisheries for future generations, as it is everyone's kuleana (responsibility)!

**Nathan Ilaoa** (American Samoa AP vice chair) is the owner of the Flying Fox Gastropub where he serves fresh, locally caught Samoan fish. Nate was the Council's American Samoa Island Coordinator before deciding to pursue his dream of establishing his first micro-brewery while supporting his local fishery. As a returning vice chair of the American Samoa AP, Nate hopes to continue serving as a liaison for the fishing community and pushing for an increase in the U.S. tuna quota to promote equity and environmental justice.

**Richard Farrell** (CNMI AP vice chair) is an avid fishermen and Island Inspector for the Department of Finance from the island of Tinian. Previously, he worked at the Tinian Department of Lands and Natural Resources for 32 years. He has served as an AP member for more than 10 years and is appreciative for his second term as the CNMI AP vice chair. Richard's goal with the Council is to service his community by providing insight into fishery issues of the Marianas. He is admired as a great communicator within his Tinian fishing community. He believes in promoting self-sustainability and hopes to become a Council member one day.

**Judy Amesbury** (Guam AP vice chair) is an archaeologist with a specialty in marine resource use. She recently used her expertise to create the film for the Council entitled “Open Ocean Fishing in the Mariana Archipelago.” (<https://tinyurl.com/OpenOceanFishingMarianas>) For 20 years, Judy has served in many roles with the Council, including as a Scientific and Statistical Committee and AP member. She is especially interested in cultural issues regarding fishing, such as the cultural take of the green sea turtle. As the new vice chair, she looks forward to working with the Guam AP to improve fishing conditions, while addressing data collection, stock assessments and fish aggregating device issues.

**Gil Kualii** (Hawai'i AP vice chair) is a commercial fisherman from Hilo. This is his third term on the AP, and he is returning for his second term as vice chair. The ocean plays a tremendous role in his life. Since his retirement from the U.S. Navy in 2003 and the purchase of his brand-new custom Force 21' boat in 2004, he has made it a priority to learn how to be a better waterman. Gil and his wife enjoy the camaraderie and excitement of tournament fishing and participate whenever their schedule and pocketbook allow. His ultimate desire as a fisherman is to be an active participant in the management of our natural resources. Gil feels that it is his kuleana to remain involved and engaged with his community and is key to seeing positive changes.

The AP leadership is excited for the new term to help the Council achieve its motto of “Fish Forever!” 🐟