

Summary of Oral Comments Received on Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Sanctuary Proposal

April 6, 2024

Virtual Public Meeting via GoToWebinar

Meeting Summary

74 attendees

10 people provided comment (some provided multiple rounds)

Comments Received

Dave Raney

As a former conservation representative of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council, Raney is concerned that the National Marine Sanctuaries Act provides the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council the opportunity to submit a fisheries management plan. Raney is concerned that this could have the unintended result of providing a backdoor for commercial fishing. Raney wants to ensure that the sanctuary designation does not provide a vehicle for commercial fishing to come in.

Pete Stauffer

Stauffer is the National Ocean Protection Manager for the Surfrider Foundation and spoke on behalf of the US network including the four Hawai'i chapters. Stauffer strongly supports the Alternative 1 boundary which would provide long lasting protections. Stauffer also supports science based regulations and the development of a robust Sanctuary Management Plan to strengthen collaboration and stewardship efforts. Stauffer recommends NOAA hire a Native Hawaiian Program Specialist to engage with the Native Hawaiian community. Stauffer also commented that this is an opportunity to center Native Hawaiian leadership.

Isaac "Paka" Harp

Harp comes from a generation of fishers and served on the Reserve Advisory Council, and feels the need to give back to the ocean. Harp is concerned with the co-management structure of the proposed sanctuary and would like to make sure the co-trustees are included. Harp also recommended that the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group be included as a fifth co-trustee. Harp highlighted that there needs to be a good system for monitoring the area. In particular, an Automatic Identification System would be preferable to a Vessel Monitoring System so the public can access the data and managers can be more easily alerted. If the sanctuary is designated, Harp requests the Outer Sanctuary Zone be named "pu'uhonua" which means a place of safety and refuge.

Roberto Torres

Torres is a firefighter at Midway Atoll. Torres desires the participation of marine biology students from Kamehameha, UH Mānoa, Hawai'i Pacific University, and those majoring in Native Hawaiian studies. Torres wants to get more Native Hawaiians involved and take ownership.

Karyn Bigelow

On behalf of Creation Justice Ministries

Bigelow spoke on behalf of Creation Justice Ministries. Bigelow supports the proposed sanctuary as it is an area sacred for Native Hawaiians. Bigelow supports partnerships with Native Hawaiian practitioners, scientific organizations, and institutions. Bigelow notes that the management tools and protections provided by the sanctuary are necessary to protect the area's ecosystem.

Cha Smith

Smith was part of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Hui that helped establish the existing Monument. Smith is concerned the sanctuary will not actually provide more protection. Smith is particularly concerned about commercial fishing. Smith is also concerned about the exclusion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Narissa Brown

Papahānaumokuākea is an area of regeneration and not appropriate for extraction. The non-commercial fishing exemption could allow for extraction. Specifically, Brown is concerned about the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council proposed extraction of fish which is not in line with Mai Ka Pō Mai or the State of Hawai'i cultural impact assessment. Brown recommends the exemption be removed as the fishing issue can overshadow the benefits of sanctuary designation. Brown desires more involvement with Native Hawaiians and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. If non-commercial fishing will be allowed, it should be incorporated into the next Monument Management Plan and ensure it aligns with Native Hawaiians and not commercial interests.

Stephanie Fried

Fried notes that the sanctuary designation introduces threats compared to existing protections. Fried is concerned the sanctuary designation introduces the possibility of fishing in the sanctuary as there is a push for non-commercial fishing. Fried is concerned about exemptions for prohibitions under the guise of research. In particular, commercial activities could occur under the guise of research. Fried is also concerned about the co-management structure and wants the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to be included as having equal co-management roles. Additionally, Fried notes that the Monument Expansion Area is weaker than the rest of the protected areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service doesn't need an overlay by the Department of Commerce. Protections should match the State protections and match the executive orders.

Mike Nakachi

Nakachi is concerned about the co-management structure and desires for the co-trustees including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to be included at the table to allow for full transparency. Nakachi is concerned about fishing activities. If Kānaka Maoli catch for sustenance that is fine but concerned about opening up the backdoor to commercial fishing. Once you start to change the dynamic to monetary value including cost recovery and covering expenses, that is no longer a cultural or Native Hawaiian practice. Nakachi wants loopholes closed so that will never occur. The realm should be reserved for all forms of Kanaloa.

Tammy Harp

Harp is concerned with having the Department of Commerce designated as the primary governing entity. Harp supports the current co-management structure with all of the co-trustees. Harp also notes that co-management is needed so as not to dismantle the trust that has been built.

April 8, 2024

Public Meeting - Aloha Tower, Honolulu, O'ahu

Meeting Summary

22 attendees

4 people provided comment

Comments Received

Brian Kulik

Kulik is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Kulik expressed support for the proposal, and that keeping waters pure through marine sanctuaries and organizations such as NOAA will ensure that all marine life will continue to prosper, and thus humankind will prosper. He also noted that the ocean gives life, and the greatest gift is sustenance.

Gigi Kulik

Kulik echoed the comments of the previous commenter, Brian Kulik.

Don Palawski

Palawski is a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge Manager. Palawski expressed support for Alternative 3, and stated that it is important for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the National Wildlife Refuge Act to have jurisdiction to manage the refuges, as National Marine Sanctuaries should have the authority to manage the sanctuary. Palawski expressed that this would not affect current management, but would complement it, and allow the sanctuary program to supplement the National Wildlife Refuge Act.

Dean Sensui

Sensui is a member of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group. Sensui noted that NOAA stated that the Northwestern Hawaiian Island chain is and has long been pristine. Sensui noted that there were eight fishery vessels permitted for the area before the Monument was expanded, but that there were no traces of this human activity because of the large size of the area - it is the size of the west coast. Sensui stated that those fishermen could not overfish the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. That would be like saying that one could overfish the Big Island by themselves. Sensui expressed that he would like the State of Hawai'i to get involved in managing the area, but realistically the state does not have the resources to do so. Sensui stated that he would rather see the State of Hawai'i resources (money) be put to use in the main Hawaiian Islands to help manage and improve resources. Sensui noted the importance of this by stating that the people of Hawai'i depend on the local fisheries, and the state should therefore focus on the resources of the main Hawaiian Islands. Sensui closed by noting that even the Coast Guard is resource limited and has difficulty patrolling Papahānaumokuākea.

April 9, 2024

Public Meeting - Kāneʻohe, Oʻahu

Meeting Summary

30 attendees

4 people provided comment

Comments Received

Luella Leonardi

Leonardi stated that she attended the meeting with an interest in understanding what is going on and what the proposal is. Leonardi stated that she has attended many community meetings and expressed opinions since 1974. Leonardi stated that we need to stretch our relationships to local fishermen, who aren't here anymore, who had been fishing throughout the Pacific. Leonardi expressed that she is trying to make those connections, as there have been a lot of meetings. Leonardi closed by stating that there is a gap between us and you (NOAA) that she is trying to close.

Nalani Minton

Minton shared that she attended the virtual meeting on Saturday, and that there were longtime activists who spoke about things that were confusing, as Native Hawaiian communities have not been involved in the design, don't understand how each community is going to interact with the process, and don't know who will make the decision regarding which alternative is selected. Minton stated that there are apparent conflicts of interest, and that there are no answers to some of these questions, and that questions won't be answered during the public meetings. Minton stated that the communities need to understand what they think the impacts will be. She noted that many things that are written sound protective, but questioned what the

role of the community is. Minton expressed concerns with permitting, stating that things could be permitted sometimes and not others, and asked about the role that sustenance would play in the lives of each community. Minton expressed additional concerns, including that NOAA funds the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, and that NOAA and the Department of Commerce are involved. Minton stated that because of the exploitation that is part of Hawaiian history, it is difficult to understand how these things are not a conflict of interest, even if there is good intention. As indigenous Peoples, Minton stated that there is a kuleana to protect resources and life sources. Minton also raised questions about migration routes, including use by whales and other species. She asked about the potential for corridors for protection of these species, for when they are both within and outside the boundaries.

Brian Bowen

Bowen stated that while he works for the University, he speaks as a private citizen. Bowen expressed support for the proposal, stating that scientists who work on conservation came to a consensus that 30% of the oceans need to be protected in order to maintain healthy oceans. Bowen expressed that the citizens of Hawai'i should be proud, as it is one of the few places that have actually achieved this, first with the Monument and now with the proposed sanctuary.

Jim Kastner

Kastner stated that he is one of 100,000 people who fought against the strongest possible protections for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands during previous efforts and processes to protect the area. Kastner stated that for decades, NOAA has refused to provide the regulations, penalty schedules, and strong enforcement, including Automatic Identification System and satellite monitoring. Kastner stated that reserve and state refuge protections are some of the strongest on earth, and that NOAA should issue and enforce these regulations and then spread them to the weak(ly protected) Monument Expansion Area. Kastner stated that the draft environmental impact statement fails to do this. Kaster noted that in 2006, the state demanded that any sanctuary must apply the strict standards of the state refuge, similar to the reserve where access is very limited, all activities are automatically prohibited except for a short list, prohibitions apply equally to everyone, and commercial and recreational fisheries are banned protecting fish nurseries supplying the main Hawaiian Islands. Kastner noted that public hearings are mandatory for all state permit applications, unlike a secretive NOAA permit process. The Monument bans bioprospecting and preserves these protections. Unlike the proposed sanctuary, the Monument is protected by four equal co-trustees. Kastner stated that the 2016 Monument Expansion Area introduced loopholes and made possible activities that were banned in the reserve, refuge, and original Monument, but that at least both the Department of Commerce and Department of Interior have equal status in the Expansion Area. Kaster stated that NOAA claims the proposed sanctuary offers new protections, but that NOAA is not applying the protective language of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve or the State of Hawai'i Northwestern Islands Marine Refuge to the Monument Expansion Area and the full sanctuary. Kastner stated that NOAA is spreading weak loopholes of the Monument Expansion Area to the sanctuary, and that NOAA proposes a non-commercial fishery, which may violate the ban on drilling, dredging, waste dumping, or

damaging the ecosystem. Kastner expressed concern regarding the exemption for the Department of Commerce and NOAA science activities and research from the prohibited activities, and stated that NOAA also wants to sell Special Use Permits based on market value. Kastner stated that Papahānaumokuākea is not for sale, not for commercial gain, and not for fishing. Kastner closed by stating that a former NOAA General Counsel has raised concerns with threats caused by NOAA's plan, and that the draft environmental impact statement fails to address these concerns. Kastner requested that money not be spent on fancy hearings and videos, but instead used to issue regulations and a penalty schedule, and enforce regulations, for the reserve and Monument based on the strongest existing protections.

April 10, 2024

Public Meeting - Wai'anae, O'ahu

Meeting Summary

7 attendees

3 people provided comment

Comments Received

William 'Ailā

Ailā was involved in the process since before the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and the Reserve Advisory Council (of which he is a former chair). Ailā invoked Uncle Walter Paolo, Eddie Kananana, Kawika Kapahuhehua, Isabella Abbott and others who were there from the beginning. The group that approached President Clinton, including several fishermen who had first hand experience in Papahānaumokuākea, inspired many of the regulations that were eventually put into place in (Clinton's) Executive Order. Similarly to what those fishermen desired, Ailā supports a sanctuary that is no take except for subsistence.

Ailā supports Alternative 1 because it is more comprehensive, and from an ecosystem perspective, better protects the system connection. Ailā notes that the health of the parts is interrelated: birds coral, reef fish, pelagic fish, nitrogen cycle, etc.

Ailā stated that bartering was not a traditional Hawaiian practice. Ailā stated concern about the National Marine Fisheries Service rulemaking because there's no such thing as customary exchange/cultural bartering in Hawai'i, and that concept was introduced by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Ailā states that it's about time for a sanctuary (designation), after 30 years in the making. Ailā stated that a sanctuary would be stronger and more protective because the National Marine Sanctuaries Act regulations are durable and have more teeth than the Antiquities Act/ the monument, and are more enforceable. As strong as the monument status is, there are rustlings in the U.S. Supreme Court that Chief Justice

Robert is interested in bringing a case related to the size of monuments. Ailā also is concerned that next year there may be a president who is not supportive of any type of resource management. Ailā stated that all these dangers highlight benefits that can be achieved by National Marine Sanctuaries status. Ailā recommended that Papahānaumokuākea should be the name for the entire sanctuary area.

Luwella Leonardi

Leonardi stated that she lives and grew up in the Hawaiian homestead in Waimānalo, and is the daughter of a fisherman, and is a cultural practitioner. Leonardi works in classrooms. Leonardi stated that she does not support the sanctuary, and is concerned that this information needs to be brought into the classroom. Leonardi asked for clarity on the docket for the sanctuary proposal. Leonardi stated that she works with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and has a degree in Geography, with expertise in cartography.

Malva Ailā

Ailā is a lifetime resident of Waʻianae, and long-time supporter of protections for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Ailā strongly supports the sanctuary as Papahānaumokuākea is a special place and needs the highest level of protection.

April 11, 2024

Public Meeting - Waimea, Kauaʻi

Meeting Summary

13 attendees

4 people provided comment (some provided multiple rounds)

Comments Received

Hoku Cody

Cody stated that she supports sanctuary designation. Cody does not support including more of Middle Bank within the eastern boundary of the sanctuary, citing previous (2016) agreements made with fishers and others relating to this area. Cody supports Mai Ka Pō Mai as a guidance document for management, and specifically mentions management emphases on cultural aspects and on protecting seabirds in the face of climate change.

Abraham Albilado

Albilado is a commercial fisherman who expressed that his childhood dream was to fish in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and he stated that this was lost when the monument was established. Albilado sees fishing as foundational to community health and culture. Albilado stated that he opposes including more of Middle Bank within the eastern boundary, and cited the previous community opposition to that. Albilado questions closures of areas to fishing.

Albilado questioned whether data show benefits of the sanctuary to Native Hawaiians, and whether data will support the statement that Northwestern Hawaiian Islands closure leads to more fish being found in the Main Hawaiian Islands. Albilado stated that he feels fish need people to manage them, similar to tending a garden on land, or the resource will degrade.

Klayton Kubo

Kubo questioned whether NOAA examined benefits of a sanctuary on fishing on the people of Hawai'i. Kubo explained that the monument can be removed by a president, but a sanctuary cannot. Kubo expressed concern about extending a sanctuary boundary at Middle Bank, citing the need to retain the area as one of the best fishing grounds; and to honor past promises made to fishers regarding this area.

Evan Manini

On behalf of the Kealohanui 'Ohana

Manini spoke on behalf of his mother's 'ohana, Kealohanui, having lineal ties to Nihoa, Manini stated that managers should listen to the users and descendents. Manini expressed anger that the USA has excluded his family from his historic homelands. Manani stated that his family, including his mo'opuna, should be invited in the future to visit and fish in the sanctuary. Manini also is concerned about who will conduct enforcement in the area.

April 12, 2024

Public Meeting - Hanalei, Kaua'i/ Virtual via GoToWebinar

Meeting changed to virtual format due to hazardous weather and flooding conditions

Meeting Summary

10 attendees

3 people provided comment

Comments Received

Lynn Bowen

Bowen supports the sanctuary designation and hopes it moves forward as it would do nothing but good things. It is a needed addition that will provide needed protection.

Maka'ala Ka'aumoana

Ka'aumoana testified on behalf of an organization whose mission is to protect traditional rights practices and lifestyles. Ka'aumoana supports the sanctuary designation and the continuation of the current rules and regulations. Papahānaumokuākea protects unique and valued resources and provides a safe place for these resources to teach, feed, and propagate vital life to the Pacific realm. The sanctuary status does not change the protections and purpose of Papahānaumokuākea. Ka'aumoana supports the addition of regulations that protect against extractive practices for energy. Ka'aumoana considers Kaua'i to be the people's connection to

Papahānaumokuākea and many of their families have genealogical history and kuleana within the boundaries of the monument or sanctuary. Ka'aumoana specifically supports the Alternative 1 boundary.

Abraham Albilado

Albilado is a second generation fisherman from Waimea, Kaua'i. Albilado is in opposition of the bill if it moves forward. Albilado stated he would like to see scientific evidence to support why protection is needed, how it supports the Native Hawaiian people, and if it provides more fish. Albilado supports fishing as it is a huge part of the culture but noted that it is often overlooked. Albilado highlights that they have already lost 80 - 90% of the Hawaiian archipelago to fishing and is concerned they could lose more. Albilado notes that fishing is very important to the community and the fishermen are the ones that take care of the ocean. Albilado states that if you really care about the Hawaiian people then you should take a second look at this. If there is no scientific evidence that the Monument is producing more fish for the main Hawaiian islands then there must be a sunset date.

April 13, 2024

Public Meeting - Li'hue, Kaua'i

Meeting Summary

8 attendees

3 people provided comment

Comments Received

Molly Lutcavage

Lutcavage is a fishery oceanographer, former sea turtle ecologist, and has served as a scientist on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council Scientific and Statistical Committee for the past 11 years. Lutcavage supports the No Action Alternative because of how much additional work is needed to manage what is currently being done and how much further research is needed to better understand the resources in the area. Lutcavage expresses the important role that fishermen play in science, policy, and the economy. Lutcavage would like to see NOAA and the State of Hawai'i acknowledge and listen to the needs of fishermen.

Presley Wann

Wann, a genealogical descendant of Hā'ena, Nāpali Coast, and Nihoa, supports Alternative 1. In 2014, Wann had an opportunity to visit Nihoa and see what a place can look like when taken care of. Wann expresses that Papahānaumokuākea is like a church to Native Hawaiians. Wann shared the importance of the birds to Native Hawaiians for finding fish and guiding them when returning home. Wann concluded that the answers to the future are in the past and the priority focus should be on culture, traditional practices, and caring for the place.

Kupono Haituka

Haituka expresses that Papahānaumokuākea is an example of successful conservation that provides benefits to the main Hawaiian Islands. Haituka notes that Papahānaumokuākea is a place where western and indigenous science intersect and that Papahānaumokuākea can be a leading example for how science is conducted across Hawai'i. Haituka has questions about what exemptions for military practices in the area means.

April 15, 2024

Public Meeting - Hilo, Hawai'i

Meeting Summary

26 attendees

6 people provided comment

Comments Received

Craig Severence

Severence is a retired fisheries anthropologist from UH Hilo, licensed commercial fisherman, and serves on the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Severence speaks as an individual and supports sanctuary designation in favor of Alternative 2 and supports commercial fishing in the Monument Expansion Area. Severence explains the primary reason for supporting sanctuary designation is because the proposal has the advantage of requiring comprehensive social, economic, and cultural assessments under three major pieces of Congressional legislation. Severence notes that large-scale marine protected areas are popular, but aren't well supported by scientific literature. Severence highlights two papers that focus on the economic impact of closing commercial fishing in the Monument Expansion Area. Severence supports Native Hawaiian permits for sustenance and subsistence fishing and suggests reconsidering customary exchange as a way of cost recovery in the Monument Expansion Area, so that continuation of some fishing is supported.

Roxanne Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka

Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka supports sanctuary designation based on knowledge and practices through lived experiences as a kia'i loko, kia'i Kanaloa, and marine biologist.

Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka explains that an intervention is needed through sanctuary designation based on the threats and impacts identified in the draft environmental impact statement.

Papahānaumokuākea needs to be treated as a large-scale loko i'a and focus on restocking and rebalancing. Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka supports fishing prohibitions and has concerns about non-commercial fishing exemptions due to the lack of effective monitoring and surveillance.

Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka does not support customary exchange as a cultural practice and notes that the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's use of this is inaccurate.

Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka expresses major concerns on the following: lack of capacity within ONMS to adequately serve as kia'i of the area; lack of equity within ONMS when it comes to

the knowledge and rights of indigenous people; lack of authority given to Native Hawaiians in the permitting process; and lack of authority given to the Sanctuary Advisory Council in decision making. Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka requests that the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group have a voice in the permitting process and to hire full-time positions, specifically Native Hawaiians who have the credible knowledge, skills, and experiences to ensure that the Native Hawaiian cultural objectives and strategies are met. Keli'ikipikāneokolohaka concluded that Kanaloa consciousness must be considered.

Rikki Torres-Pestana

Raised in Hilo, Torres-Pestana expresses that NOAA is the military and has a history of polluting the most sacred estuaries. Torres-Pestana also expressed that NOAA should not be here and what NOAA is doing is a crime.

John Broward

Broward, a retiree from the National Park Service, supports sanctuary designation and Alternative 1. Broward expresses the need to protect the area for future generations through continued monitoring and enforcement.

Jamie Barlow

Barlow speaks as an engaged citizen and supports sanctuary designation. Barlow shares concern that anchoring a vessel in shallow waters is necessary from a safety standpoint. Barlow proposes a solution: to notify the U.S. Coast Guard and pay a fee to anchor in a designated space. Barlow also recommends building collaboration with the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service and the State of Hawai'i for satellite monitoring. Barlow supports longline fishing in the offshore environment and would like to see more job opportunities in the industry.

Mahina Kapulani

Born and raised in the ahupua'a of Hilo, Kapulani expresses the need to include Native Hawaiians and the local people in decision making. Kapulani notes that there are too many marine sanctuaries created to keep out indigenous people and that marine sanctuaries are only accessible to the rich. Kapulani expresses that the Native Hawaiian community are tired of it and not to forget about them when making decisions.

April 16, 2024

Public Meeting - Kahalu'u, Kona, Hawai'i

Meeting Summary

14 attendees

7 people provided comment

Comments Received

Isaac "Paka" Harp

Harp was an author of the draft plan that led to the Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve designation. Harp is concerned about a reduction in protections. Harp highlights that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are not for sale and that regulations and strong enforcement should be provided for. The protections should be strengthened to be consistent with the State of Hawai'i and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge regulations which are the strongest. In addition, Harp comments that prohibitions must apply to everyone including NOAA. No commercial or recreational fishing should be allowed. Harp also desires a transparent permit process. There should be a permanent record of permits issued. In addition, Harp notes that an Automatic Identification System is preferable to a Vessel Monitoring System as it is publicly accessible and provides a safety measure. Harp also desires to maintain the existing co-management structure including for example the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. In addition, funding should be equally distributed among the four co-trustees. Harp also requests that the entire Middle Bank area be excluded from the sanctuary so fishermen can be accommodated and not accidentally get fined if they follow the fish across the border.

Claire Iloprizi

Iloprizi spoke on the Declaration of Indigenous People Article 6 which states that indigenous people have a right to protect, preserve, and access. Iloprizi highlights that the most significant threats to Papahānaumokuākea are from humans. Iloprizi is highly concerned about military exemptions. In particular Iloprizi is concerned about the impacts of sonar from military activities which can severely harm and damage marine wildlife.

Nalani Merrill

Merrill noted that the Alternative 1 boundary seems like the better choice as it is inclusive. Merrill notes, however, that saying it is protected and it actually being protected are two different things. Merrill highlights that there are grants that can support these types of activities that NOAA should apply for. Merrill appreciates the way scientists share information but also recommends sharing the information in a way that is accessible to youth. In summary, Merrill notes that this is a wonderful project that will enhance things in the future.

Jason Helyer

Helyer is representing personal views. Helyer offers support for the Alternative 2 boundary. The reasoning behind this decision is that a lot of marine management has turned to broad decision making. Helyer recommends that this should be re-evaluated and be specific about what should be protected. Helyer also notes that stakeholders should be communicated with.

Lynn Ryan

Ryan notes that Alternative 1 protects a larger area. Ryan appreciates any protection overlay that can be offered. Ryan also voiced great concern about sonar activity in and near the area as it can cause damage to marine wildlife.

Rick Gaffney

Gaffney supports the Alternative 1 boundary. Gaffney recognizes the culmination of over 100 years of effort in protecting the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Gaffney mentions the opportunity they have had to see the islands personally and be actively involved in its protection as a Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council member for over 20 years. Gaffney notes that the sanctuary provides necessary protections. Gaffney also highlights the high amount of endemism that exists in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Gaffney mentions that the world's oceans are under threats including the potential of deep sea mining. Thus, cementing protections is essential to ensure the future of this place that is worthy of protection.

Zahz Hewlen

Hewlen notes his support for the Alternative 1 boundary but voiced concern on the amount of permitted uses and exemptions. In particular, Hewlen is concerned with the exemptions related to military activity. Hewlen requests transparency in issued permits and for them to be part of the public record. Hewlen also notes that he would like to see education as one of the sanctuary values.

April 17, 2024

Public Meeting - Kahului, Maui

Meeting Summary

20 attendees

8 people provided comment

Comments Received

Kekuewa Kikiloi

On behalf of the Hui Manamana of the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group Kikiloi spoke on behalf of the Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group-Hui Manamana, which has over 20 years of management connections to Papahānaumokuākea as well as ancestral ties. Hui Manamana supports Alternative 1 because it protects deep water and shallow water environments, including the expansion area. Hui Manamana appreciates that the sanctuary management plan is influenced by Mai Ka Pō Mai. Hui Manamana opposes expanding the boundary outside of the present monument footprint. Kikiloi expressed appreciation that regulations will provide civil penalties and recourse for damage assessment, and that the advisory council will be retained intact. Hui Manamana is alarmed about the potential for commercial fishing and large scale extraction of fish from Monument Expansion Area. Hui Manamana opposes the sale of fish. Hui Manamana opposes barter or sale of fish. Since the fishing regulations are being promulgated in a separate process from sanctuary designation, the Hui Manamana believes the National Marine Fisheries Service rule needs a separate, comprehensive environmental impact statement with an adequate public comment process.

Hui Manamana believes sanctuary designation would add enduring safeguards against threats associated with political change and climate change. Sanctuary status would also enhance opportunities for funding and other support, including for outreach, research operations, resource protection and citizen science.

The Hui Manamana is concerned about the non-commercial fishing regulations being promulgated by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Hui Manamana is concerned that the Native Hawaiian subsistence fishing permit being proposed is open to the general public, not just Native Hawaiians. Hui Manamana is also very much concerned about the amount of annual catch being proposed, specifically that 350,000 lbs of bottomfish and 180,000 lbs of pelagic fish are beyond subsistence level. Hui Manamana also is concerned as to how the National Marine Fisheries Service will evaluate their permits, and enforce their rule. Hui Manamana also believes that since the sanctuary process and the non-commercial fishing rules process are not aligned, that the National Marine Fisheries Service rule needs a separate environmental impact statement. Fishing is a primary threat to the place, and it is not being evaluated in the sanctuary environmental impact statement.

Kanoelani Steward

Steward has had opportunities to access and work in Papahānaumokuākea. Steward supports a sanctuary as it will add another layer of protection. Because of experiences in Papahānaumokuākea, she supports protections. Steward stated that she also supports the Hui Manamana comments.

Kalamaehu Takahashi

Takahashi has had opportunities to access and work in Papahānaumokuākea, including intertidal surveys, research on Nihoa, and deep water research with the Ocean Exploration Trust. Takahashi expressed opposition to extractive processes, and to removing resources from Papahānaumokuākea and cited examples of proper relationships and actions, including conducting training for voyagers and navigators and reconnecting with ancestors. Takahashi supports Alternative 1 and measures to keep area users accountable.

Takahashi referenced interviews of kūpuna Uncle Buzzy Agard, a former commercial fisher in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands who saw the impacts of fishing and realized that fishing there is not sustainable. Takahashi noted that subsistence fishing actually means focusing on your locality, where you live, and maintaining that local kuleana. How we mālama our resources in our own ahupua'a, is most important. Takahashi noted that we should do that first before considering the kūpuna islands and the realm of akua for subsistence. Takahashi is concerned that extractive activities will exceed a threshold, and damage Papahānaumokuākea.

Katy Weeks

Weeks is a Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary volunteer, and spoke as an individual. Weeks supports Alternative 1. Weeks requests consideration for protections for koholā in the sanctuary, including vessel rules, that are similar to the

protections included in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale Sanctuary. These include restrictions on sonar and maintaining a minimum distance away from koholā.

Ben Walin

Walin is concerned about sustenance and subsistence fishing in the proposed regulations. Walin expressed that it is critical to culture to be able to bring fish home. Walin's uncle formerly was a fisher at French Frigate Shoals. Walin's uncle brought home bycatch to share with family, which constituted a major source of protein. Sharing with family is important.

Alisha Chauhan

Chauhan is a conservation consultant. Chauhan supports a sanctuary. Chauhan strongly advocates for the consideration of manō as keystone species, and asks that entanglement of wildlife be considered in fishing regulations, and that enforcement be provided worthy of a national and global marine protected area.

Skippy Hau

Hau is retired from the State of Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources. Hau worked on bottomfish surveys in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands in the 1980s when commercial rules were in place. Hau conducted research out of Tern Island, French Frigate Shoals. Hau observed that the military infrastructure is deteriorated and hazardous. Hau did not see the military cleaning up or fixing eroding infrastructure there. Hau also is concerned with contamination at Midway. Hau would like to see those places get repaired and cleaned up, including removal of plastics and derelict fishing gear.

Thorne Abbott

Abbott is a current Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council member. Abbott fully supports Alternative 1. Abbott would like NOAA to hurry up and get it done.

April 18, 2024

Public Meeting - Kaunakakai, Moloka'i

Meeting Summary

14 attendees

9 people provided comment

Comments Received

Gil Kualii

Kualii is a retired Big Island fisherman. Kualii voiced support for a No Action Alternative, and skepticism that a sanctuary is necessary and the only way to preserve the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Kualii voiced equity concerns about the remoteness of the Northwestern

Hawaiian Islands and that Hawaiians without resources could not access it. Kualii believes the sanctuary would only be accessible for mainland scientists and rich people.

Kualii stated that he felt the sanctuary was already a done deal. Kualii asked NOAA to keep the Eastern boundary intact and not expand it. Kualii expressed a belief that a sanctuary and fisherman can co-exist. Kualii is concerned that exercising the right to fish is an empty exercise if fishers cannot afford to go there, and there needs to be a way for fishermen to recover costs.

Walter Ritte

Ritte stated that he likes the idea of subsistence use by Hawaiians in a sanctuary. Moloka'i having a dual economy (cash and subsistence), subsistence is important to survival. Ritte stated that he would like to see a solution for how to bring back the things the Hawaiian community needs from a sanctuary, and making sure it is actually for subsistence use.

Lori Buchanan

On behalf of the Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition.

Buchanan is a Moloka'i resident. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition supports Alternative 1, and the additional layer of protections a sanctuary brings. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition appreciates that the sanctuary proposal does not expand the boundary beyond the current monument footprint. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition opposes Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's proposed large-scale extraction of fish from the sanctuary, and the sale, barter or trade of fish from the sanctuary, including cost recovery. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition notes that the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service rule is not in alignment with the sanctuary, and notes that the process should have an environmental impact statement and public comment period. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition would like to see Alternative 1 and regulations that protect resources to the highest degree possible. The Expand Papahānaumokuākea Coalition appreciates that Mai Ka Pō Mai informed the sanctuary management plan.

Buchanan stated that NOAA's approach via public meetings is not the ideal way to engage the Moloka'i community. Buchanan felt that Moloka'i is last on NOAA's list. Buchanan is concerned that more advance outreach and education are needed, especially for complex proposals like the sanctuary proposal. Buchanan acknowledged that while protecting marine resources is important she also is part of the subsistence economy. She considers herself lucky that Moloka'i is self-reliant and she doesn't need to go to Papahānaumokuākea to fish.

Clayton Ching

Ching is concerned that a sanctuary should keep outside (international) fishing vessels out of the area. Ching emphasized the need to keep fishing in the archipelago for Hawai'i and Hawaiians.

Petrisha Alvarez

Alvarez was raised on Moloka'i, and currently is a Sanctuary Advisory Council member for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary. The Humpback Whale Sanctuary Advisory Council is in support of the sanctuary designation and sent a letter.

Alvarez emphasized that sanctuaries provide educational opportunities, and the sanctuary will be very important for the protection of critical ecological resources of Papahānaumokuākea.

Alvarez also noted that the health of the archipelago affects people here in the Main Hawaiian Islands and whales as well. Alvarez stated that the Sanctuary Advisory Council views Papahānaumokuākea as a sister sanctuary site and cornerstone of protection for protection in marine waters around the USA.

Alvarez stated that the Sanctuary Advisory Council is in support of the sanctuary protections, because if we don't, international entities will come in and take the fish.

Godfrey Akaka, Jr.

On behalf of the Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association

The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association believes anti-fishing is prevalent across the state and that much of it has an economic basis. Rules and closures without scientific data are indicators of this anti-fishing sentiment. Akaka, Jr. stated he is not a commercial fisherman but supports commercial fishing. The Native Hawaiian Gathering Rights Association questions whether there is an economic impact statement evaluating the (increased cost) impacts to consumers of closing fishing grounds and associated need for increasing fish imports. Akaka, Jr. stated that overpopulation of apex predators (unmanaged) causes loss of baby seals, and that systems need to be managed. Akaka, Jr. stated that he does not trust the government, and cannot support the sanctuary proposal. Akaka, Jr. stated that no one is going to go subsistence fishing in Papahānaumokuākea because they cannot afford to go there. There is no way to pay for it and make money for expenses.

Kaleo Cravalho

Cravalho expressed concern for sustainability and asked why Hawai'i depends on imported fish, when the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands could provide a source. Cravalho emphasized consideration of local people and pono practice.

Unknown

This commenter stated that commercial fishing should be allowed in the sanctuary, with regulations, especially regarding invasive species. The commenter stated he believed 'we' should pay Hawaiian fishermen to go to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and, and also to pay for their fish. In particular, he noted Hawai'i fishermen can help with conservation efforts in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands by removing invasive species (fish like ta'ape and roi).

Nani Kawaa

Kawaa is an educator at a local elementary school. Kawaa felt the Moloka'i meeting was poorly advertised, and did not attract young people who need to be informed, and help make our decisions.