

# Sanctuary Advisory Council

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Friday, September 4, 2015

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa  
Rotunda Room, Tauese P.F. Sunia Ocean Center  
9:00-11:00AM

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**PURPOSE:** TO PROVIDE UPDATES ON THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES PROGRAMS, NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY OF AMERICAN SAMOA, YOUTH ACTIVITY BOOK, NOAA OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES AND NOAA FISHERIES AND USFWS AUTHORITIES AT ROSE ATOLL MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT.

- I. **Welcome**, David Jennings, Acting Chair  
Peter Taliva'a a word of prayer.

- A. Roll Call

**SAC Members (in attendance)**

Sepp Steffany, Fishing

Peter Houk, Research (via conference call)

Peter Crispin, Diving

Fonoti Simanu, Community-at-Large: Aunu'u

David Jennings, Community-at-Large: Swains Island

Togiola Tulafono, Community-at-Large: East Tutuila

Kelley Tagarino, ASCC/Sea Grant

Fatima Sauafea-Leau, NOAA Pacific Islands Regional Office

Murray Bauer, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement

Allen Tom, ONMS Pacific Islands Regional Director

**SAC Members (excused)**

Betty Cavanagh, Tourism

Atapana Fili Ulufale, Community-at-Large: West Tutuila

Togotogo Sotoa, Community-at-Large: Manu'a Islands

Dean Hudson, Ocean Recreation/Ocean Centered Ecotourism

Keniseli Lafaele, AS-DOC

Dr. Ruth Matagi, AS-DMWR

Ameko Pato, AS-EPA

Scott Burch, NPAS

Eric Roberts, USCG

Tara Drabble, Youth Member

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## **SAC Members (absent)**

Tony Ta'ase, Fishing  
Teri Peters, Education

## **Substitutes (in attendance)**

Yvonne Mika, AS-DMWR  
Michael Larson, NPAS

## **National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa:**

Gene Brighthouse, Superintendent  
Atuatasi Lelei Peau, Deputy Superintendent  
Apulu Veronika Molio'o Mata'utia Mortenson, Communications & Community Coordinator  
Isabel Gaoteote Halatuituia, Education Coordinator and IT Specialist  
Peter Taliva'a, Boat Captain  
Alma Cornejo, Administrative Assistant  
Tanimalie Letuli, Volunteer and Visitor Coordinator  
Iosefa Siatu'u, Customer Service Coordinator  
Ropate Delana, Volunteer  
Joseph Paulin, Conservation Ecology and Policy Specialist

## **Others in Attendance:**

John Armor, ONMS Acting Director  
Richard Hall, NOAA Fisheries  
Samantha Brook, NOAA Fisheries  
Hoku Ka'aekuahini, NOAA Fisheries  
Brian Peck, United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
Siaifoi Fa'aumu, Public

B. Introductions – Members introduced themselves

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C. Swearing-In of New Members:

- Joseph Paulin introduced the process.
- John Armor swore in new member Peter Houk and reaffirmed all members' oaths.
- David Jennings welcomed Peter to the Council.

D. Recognize Outgoing Council Members – Tom Drabble

E. Review and Approval of March 4, 2015 Meeting Notes

F. Approval of Agenda

- Joseph Paulin stated that Tiara Drabble had a class conflict and will not be presenting. Her presentation was removed from the agenda.
- Togiola Tulafono inquired about agenda item D. It was explained that the outgoing member, Tom Drabble, was not present.
- Changes to the agenda were noted.

II. **Updates:**

A. John Armor: Acting Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

- It's quite an honor to be here with you all. This can be more of a conversation rather than a presentation. Perhaps there are questions that I can answer from the national level.
  - Why are you being visited by the Acting Director of ONMS?
1. Dan Basta was put on administrative leave since May 2015 and as Deputy Director at the time, I was asked to serve as Acting Director in his stead. I am not sure why Dan was put on administrative leave.
  2. I don't know when this issue will be resolved, but I want to assure you that I am here to lead. I have been mentored by Dan for fifteen years. I have been absolutely steadfast in my desire to keep this program pointed in the right direction and moving forward on all fronts.
  3. Fundamentally, it is relevance that I am after and making sure that ONMS and the national marine sanctuary system remain relevant and are important contributors to the issues and problems that face the communities that we serve.
  4. Our budget has remained relatively flat, but we are hopeful that there will be increases down the road.
    - ii. New national strategic plan – developing a roadmap with an eye on turning 50 in 2022.
    - iii. The process to designate new marine sanctuaries has reopened for the first time in 20 years. There have been 7 new nominations for new sanctuaries received thus far. Communities are responsible for nominating sites themselves. The 1<sup>st</sup> nomination received was declined because there was no community support. Of the 7 nominations, 2 were successful and are currently under review for eligibility to be designated as new national marine sanctuaries. We

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recently completed expansions of 3 sanctuaries (Thunder Bay, Greater Farallones and Cordell Banks). Collaborations and partnerships have continued to be critical.

## Questions:

David Jennings – questions for John Armor?

Togiola Tulafono – future of ONMS programs? Is science going to have a role in the identification of new sites? What happens to the perspective of the federal government – is it possible to deactivate sanctuaries if the federal government no longer sees the relevance? The sanctuary in American Samoa was driven by research.

John Armor - Science plays multiple roles in the designation of sites. Science is always on the front end of nominations. It is not likely that any sanctuaries would be deactivated. We need to make sure all of the sites stay relevant to communities. Remaining adaptable and relevant is key.

David Jennings – The purpose of the sanctuary and sanctuary advisory council has relevance to protecting our resources including fishing. What about the Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA)? Science is also important.

John Armor- The sanctuary advisory council provides advice to the superintendent on issues related to sanctuary management, but that doesn't mean you can't weigh in on other matters outside our regulatory authority.

Richard Hall – The proposed changes to the American Samoa LVPA are not in the scope of sanctuaries, but NOAA Fisheries. Further discussion was tabled until Richard's presentation later on the agenda.

Peter Houk – How is monitoring used?

John Armor – Management is evaluated and revisited from time to time. ONMS Condition Reports and collaborations are critical aspects to this evaluation process which includes research and monitoring.

Togiola Tulafono – NOAA Fisheries is going to allow bigger boats to fish in the LVPA? Further discussion was tabled until later on the agenda.

B. Gene Brighthouse: National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa.

- **Catlin Seaview Survey & Google Street View:** The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa partnered with Catlin who captured 360 degree underwater imagery in sanctuary management areas and around the islands of Tutuila, Aunu'u, Manu'a and Rose Atoll. Google Street View imagery was captured on land in the areas surrounding the sanctuary. Collectively, American Samoa now has one of the largest visual imagery data sets

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in the world. This imagery provides an important baseline that can be compared over time. Imagery also documented the recent global coral bleaching event in American Samoa.

- In February 2015, the National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (sanctuary) launched American Samoa **"Get into Your Sanctuary (GIYS)"** campaign that will run through October 2015. The campaign highlights communities, partnerships and the special places of the sanctuary.
- **GIYS SITE EVENTS:** In March the **Fagatele Bay** event drew more than 200 visitors that explored the wonders of this ocean treasure and its unique surroundings. 200 people participated in the **Aunu'u** "GIYS" event in April. Over 200 students and faculty were reached at Fitiuta and Faleasao Elementary and **Manu'a** High Schools. In June 2015, sanctuary staff held an event at Veterans' Memorial Stadium on **Tutuila** (relocated last minute due to weather). The event, part of a National GIYS Day, joined the Fa'a Samoa Initiative led by Troy Polamalu, retired NFL player for the Pittsburgh Steelers. More than 1,000 participants were reached.
- **YOUTH PROGRAMS:** June and July were dedicated to sanctuary Ocean Science/Ocean Swimming (OSOS) and Ocean Star summer youth programs. 65 middle and high school students became more aware the ocean ecosystem, the importance of its health and of the human impacts from land that affect ocean and natural resources. The swimming safety portion of the program also proved to be a huge success. At the closing of the OSOS program students presented their 'Now What' projects at the 2015 Youth Ocean Summit in July.
- **2015 COTS Program Summary:** In March - April, 2 weeks of crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) eradication efforts took place in American Samoa. The program, a follow-up to previous effort in 2014, was again headed by the sanctuary team. This collaboration of partners including the ONMS, NOAA Dive Center, AS-Coral Reef Advisory Group and AS-Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources and the NOAA Coral Reef Ecosystem Division is a shining example of how offices are able to share skills and resources to accomplish a common mission.
- **Building CPR/First Aid/AED Capacity Among Our Partners:** Over 70 people have been certified through this program including: American Samoa Marine Patrol, AS Fire Department, local vessel operators, the Aunu'u Alia Captains and Eco-Tour Guides, ARC volunteers and school teachers.

## Questions:

- Togiola Tulafono – How can one acquire 3-D view/goggles of virtual dives?
- Gene Brighthouse - The sanctuary will provide goggles when they become available.
- Peter Crispin – Commented on the success of the Sanctuary Photo Fishing Contest.

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- Joseph Paulin - Gave an overview of the **Sanctuary Photo Fishing Contest**. The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council, Fishing Working Group, helped to plan a photo-fishing contest to assist the sanctuary team in raising awareness of allowable and prohibited fishing practices in the sanctuary management areas. The contest ran from April-June 2015 and included events at Fagaluva, Aunu'u, Ta'u, and Fagatele Bay (photography of recreational activities or marine life only at Fagatele Bay since it is a complete no-take-area). Photos were taken within or adjacent to sanctuary waters. Photos of fishing practices and caught fish were accepted. Participants were encouraged to catch only what they or their families would eat. Families fishing together was also encouraged. All sanctuary, territorial, or other applicable regulations were to be followed. **We would like to thank the partners and sponsors of the contest:** The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Advisory Council; American Samoa Community College Community & Natural Resources Division and 4-H Program; Neil's ACE Hardware; Tool Shop; Sepp's; Cost U Less; Sadie's by the Sea; Pago Pago Game Fishing Association and Pago Pago Marine Charters and Off Da Rock Tattoos.
- C. Tiara Drabble: Youth Activity Book – was taken off the agenda do to a scheduling conflict.
- D. Murray Bauer: NOAA Office of Law Enforcement – Presented the 2015 Enforcement Report.
- Murray Bauer discussed cases of the past year and access to Fagatele Bay.

## Questions:

- John Armor - Great information. Does NPAS have enforcement boats here?
- Michael Larson – No.
- Togiola Tulafono - What is the issue with land access to Fagatele Bay?
- Murray Bauer - Access has been denied to officers trying to conduct shore-based patrols.
- Atuatasi Lelei Peau – There are two issues, access for enforcement and access for tourists. We are currently working with leading matai and SAC member from Futiga to resolve access issue to Fagatele Bay. There is also a scheduled meeting with the Office of Samoan Affairs.
- Togiola Tulafono – You could look into right-of-way access for the trail to the bay.
- Sepp Steffany – Why isn't there a mooring buoy at Fagatele Bay?
- Gene Brighthouse – There are plans to install a mooring buoy at Fagatele Bay for recreational activities like snorkeling and diving.
- Kelly Tagarino - Where do fines go?

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- Murray Bauer - It depends, but cases prosecuted under federal regulations could go the sanctuary or NOAA Fisheries.
  
- E. Richard Hall: Presentation on NOAA Fisheries and Authority at Rose Atoll Marine National Monument (*presentation follows the notes*).
  - Overview of Rose Atoll Marine National Monument
  - Map of the Monument
  - Grants Program – Education and Outreach including bilingual documents
  - Fishing Permits/Regulations – final rule June 2013
  - Customary Exchange – allowable for subsistence, sustenance and traditional fishermen.
  - People can get a fishing permit for subsistence, sustenance, traditional and recreational fishing in the Monument through the NOAA Fisheries Honolulu Office at 808-725-5000 or [http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/Library/SFD/Monument Permit Application Fillable 2013-08-01 IRC.pdf](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/Library/SFD/Monument%20Permit%20Application%20Fillable%202013-08-01_IRC.pdf)
  - NOAA Fisheries proposed changes to the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area as per the recommendations of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

## Questions:

- Peter Crispin – Do you have the ability to tap into the data that is available for this area?
  
  - Richard Hall – Since American Samoa is so isolated there isn't a lot of data.
  
  - Sepp Steffany – Moving the LVPA into 12 miles from shore would separate the connectivity between Tutuila, Aunu'u and Manu'a.
  
  - David Jennings – We are pressed for time and need to move on. Richard will be available for future comments/questions.
- 
- F. Brian Peck: Presentation on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Authority at Rose Atoll Marine National Monument and National Wildlife Refuge (*presentation follows the notes*).
  - 20 Refuges and Monuments
  - Rose Atoll – 160 miles from Tutuila
  - Wildlife Refuge – 1973 Cooperative Agreement
  - Monument – No commercial fishing as per the 2008 Presidential Proclamation 8337
  - Typically 3-4 visits to Rose Atoll per year for research and monitoring
  - Corals – over 200 species
  - Threats – ocean acidification and warming sea temperatures
  - Giant clams – most in the Territory
  - Fish – highly diverse
  - Sea Turtles – green sea turtles nest on Rose Atoll
  - Joint Turtle Program
  - Birds – 10 common species

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- Dissolved iron impacts from a shipwreck on the coral and marine life
- Pisonia – decrease due to insects and ants
- Restore pisonia by using systemic pesticide.
- Upcoming trips to Rose – October and December 2015
- Brian Peck requested that the USFWS be added to the council as a non-voting seat

## Questions:

- David Jennings – In the interest of time we need to move along. We have Brian's contact information and he will be available following the meeting.

## II. Officer Elections:

- Joseph Paulin – Since there is not a quorum officer elections will be pushed to the next council meeting.

## IV. Public Comment: None

## V. New Business:

Conservation Science Working Group: Review and Comment on Draft Science Plan

- Joseph Paulin – The draft science plan is nearing completion. Once available we would like the working group to review the plan. Peter Houk, the Research Seat, is the chair of the group. I will work with him to organize the group and review.

Amendment to the Council Charter to add USFWS Seat

- Joseph Paulin – Since there is not a quorum this item will be pushed to the next council meeting.

## VI. Concluding Remarks: *David Jennings – thanked everyone for their participation and presentations. Fa'afetai to John Armor and Allen Tom.*

***Meeting Adjourned***

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