

**Summary Notes  
Marianas Trench Monument Advisory Council Conference Call  
March 25/26, 2014**

## **1. Introductions**

Vice Chairman Frank Rabauliman acted as Chairman for this call and called the meeting to order at 9:15am ChST, 13:15 HST.

Confirmed participants:

MTMAC: Vice Chairman Frank Rabauliman (CNMI)  
Arnold Palacios (CNMI)  
Roy Tsutsui (DoD)  
Morgan Roper (USCG)  
*Absent: -Chairman Ben Sablan (CNMI)*

Agencies: Susan White (USFWS)  
Amanda Pollock (USFWS)  
Laura Beauregard (USFWS)  
Heidi Hirsh (NMFS)

## **2. Review September 12, 2013, Meeting Minutes**

Consensus to approve September meeting minutes. Minutes approved.

## **3. Updated and Report out on Action Items**

### **a. Status of CEQ commitment and Governor Inos's letter sent to DOC and DOI, 12/28/2008**

There was discussion about the status of the response to Governor Inos's letter to DOI and DOC regarding CEQ commitments. Governor Inos sent a letter in January 2014 regarding CEQ commitments to Secretary Jewell of DOI and Secretary Pritzker of the DOC. Neither USFWS nor NMFS representatives have received of this letter within their agencies.

NMFS referred to a "combined federal response letter" to CNMI regarding the submerged land and mineral transfer. The letter should be forthcoming in March or April 2014. NMFS will confirm that a joint letter is being drafted and will follow up. Note that this letter addresses the submerged lands transfer, not the CEQ commitments.

CNMI will send a copy of the Governor's CEQ commitments letter to USFWS and NMFS.

**ACTION ITEM (1):** Revisit the Inos letter on CEQ commitments, its status, and response at the next MTMAC meeting.

### **b. Visitor center/multi-purpose facility Working Group update**

A progress report of the Multipurpose Center (MPC) Subcommittee was submitted to MTMAC in March 2014, and forwarded to NMFS and USFWS. Both USFWS and NOAA were impressed with the progress of the Subcommittee.

Next steps: submit a final report of the Subcommittee findings to the MTMAC for review. Final report will include recommended specifics and criteria for the MPC as outlined by the Subcommittee. Public listening sessions will follow after the final report is submitted to the advisory council.

ACTION ITEM (2): CNMI will submit final report MPC recommendations to USFWS and NMFS.

ACTION ITEM (3): Discussion on the MPC will be revisited during a follow-up conference call scheduled for April 8/9.

### **c. Japanese vessel rescue and grounding incident at Maug on 12/2/2014- USCG checklists, draft emergency response list, and photos**

The response to the vessel grounding, including search and rescue, was conducted by Japan as it is in Japanese search and rescue area. There were good communications between USCG and Japan.

The vessel was breaking apart as the captain and crew were being rescued, and is now in pieces at Maug. There were 250 gallons of diesel onboard that were introduced to the surrounding environment when the vessel broke apart. USCG has been in touch with the owner, who has been fined for pollution. The fine has been paid.

NMFS's Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center cruises will be in the vicinity of Maug and CNMI conducting research. NMFS has asked the researchers to do a site assessment of the grounding and wreck.

USCG quick reference cards (QRC) have been distributed to MTMAC, NMFS, and USFWS representatives. The QRC purpose is to coordinate communication and response to grounding and enforcement issues that arise in the future. All parties agree that protocols need to be established on how USFWS, NMFS, USCG, and CNMI communicate on future events. In the future, the QRCs will be used to alert the incident command structure including all agencies and the CNMI.

ACTION ITEM (4): All parties are to review the QRC so that the group can develop a protocol for communication and response to be used in this area in the future.

USFWS indicated that the grounding incident at Maug is an active USFWS law enforcement issue and an investigation is ongoing. For future events, USFWS Office of Law Enforcement

will represent the USFWS in a unified incident command to respond to ship groundings and enforcement issues. An emergency response action plan will be included in the MTMNM management plan.

MOTION to recommend that the MOA for submerged lands and the monument management plan need to incorporate final decision and protocol for joint jurisdiction and law enforcement monitoring, how to use unified command process, prevention, notification, identification of stakeholders, and allocation of resources.

There was discussion as to the Arc of Fire National Wildlife Refuge. CNMI is concerned that the refuge was declared “unilaterally” and was not part of the Presidential Proclamation. Discussion of who is the lead (USFWS or CNMI) with respect to the Volcanic Unit (Arc of Fire refuge) and the Islands Unit. MTMAC and agencies need to consider who lead agency will be once transfer of submerged lands is finalized.

MOTION to recommend that at the next meeting, the USFWS will address and clarify the process and authority for how the Arc of Fire National Wildlife Refuge was created and how Maug fits into this refuge.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION to recommend that USCG, USFWS, and NOAA provide, as appropriate and legal, a summary of the incident report of the vessel grounding at Maug to the CNMI and Governor Inos.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION to recommend that USFWS provide an outline or matrix of current or interim response protocol to include and incorporate CNMI and all agencies. Discussion on motion: disagreement over whether an interim protocol was necessary.

MOTION LOST.

#### **d. Table remaining issues**

MOTION to recommend tabling remaining agenda items to next meeting.

MOTION CARRIED.

#### **4. Set time and date for next conference call**

Follow-up meeting for multipurpose center scheduled for April 8/9. NMFS needs to know about “listening sessions” before June (funds need to be spent by July) so advocated for meeting in April.

#### **5. Meeting adjourned**

**Remaining 3/25-26/2014 Agenda Items  
via email notification/discussion**

**1. USFWS Research requests received from last quarter**

USFWS received no research requests pertaining to the MTMNM last quarter.

**2. USFWS: DOI transfer of mineral rights and submerged lands to CNMI, 3/21/2014**

On March 14, 2014, DOI Secretary Sally Jewell issued a patent (the equivalent of a deed) conveying all right, title, and interest to the government of CNMI for the deposits of oil, gas, and other minerals underlying the submerged lands that were conveyed on January 16.

**3. Monument Management Plan**

Management plan objectives were sent to MTMAC on Dec. 20, 2013. NMFS and USFWS are a working together on a draft plan that will meet the draft goals previously developed. An environmental assessment is being prepared concurrently.

**4. Outreach**

Guam NWR Park Ranger Emily Sablan presented a program on Coral Reef Health and the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument at two Guam elementary schools on March 12-15, speaking to over 1,300 students from grades K-5.

The MTMAC page has been added to the USFWS and NOAA websites for the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. Meeting minutes are available for public viewing.

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/mariana\\_trench\\_marine\\_national\\_monument/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/mariana_trench_marine_national_monument/)

[http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/MNM/mnm\\_index.html](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/MNM/mnm_index.html)

**5. NOAA Research Update**

- The Marianas Archipelago Science Implementation Workshop Report and Draft Action Plan are in review and expected to be forwarded to the workshop participants for review and comment soon.
- The PIFSC received 14 research proposals from the workshop participants; 12 were approved and are scheduled for the Sette cruise in the Marianas this summer.
- The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center staff held a Volcanic Unit townhall meeting at the 2014 Ocean Sciences Convention in Honolulu on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> to receive input on gaps and desired research from national and international scientists in attendance.
- The PIFSC Sette and H'ialakai cruise activities can be viewed by the public at <http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/cruise/ha1401.php>

**Summary Notes**  
**Marianas Trench Monument Advisory Council Conference Call**  
**Special Meeting on March 2014 Agenda Item: Proposed Multipurpose (Visitor) Center**  
**April 8/9, 2014**

*This meeting is a follow-up to the March 25/26 telecon to address time-sensitive needs for consideration of planning for a Monument multipurpose center.*

**6. Introductions**

Vice Chairman Frank Rabauliman acted as Chairman for this call and called the meeting to order and confirmed participants:

MTMAC: Vice Chairman Frank Rabauliman (CNMI)  
Arnold Palacios (CNMI)  
Roy Tsutsui (DoD)  
Morgan Roper (USCG)  
*Absent: -Chairman Ben Sablan (CNMI)*

Agencies: Susan White (USFWS)  
Amanda Pollock (USFWS)  
Heidi Hirsh (NMFS)

**7. Update on Action Items**

A partial list of action items from the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting was confirmed, including

- ACTION ITEM (1) Revisit the Inos letter on CEQ commitments, its status, and response at next MTMAC meeting.
- ACTION (2) CNMI will submit final “Multipurpose Center Subcommittee” report to both agencies.
- ACTION (3) Revisit discussion on the Multipurpose Center.
- ACTION (4) All parties are to review the QRC so that the group can develop a protocol for communication and response to be used in these areas in the future.

**8. Agreement to Restrict Meeting Action Items to Multipurpose Center**

There was recognition that this telecom focus is on the Multipurpose Center (MPC) business. Reports on the unaddressed March 25/26 agenda items will be submitted via email to MTMAC members from the respective agencies.

**9. Report out on Meeting Action Item: Multipurpose Center**

**a. MPC Subcommittee Initial Report**

Subcommittee Chair Arnold Palacios sent out the MPC Subcommittee initial report via email on April 2, 2014. Roy suggested that MTMAC formally agree to submit the MPC report and recommendations to the USFWS and NMFS .

## **b. MPC Lead and Financing**

There was some discussion over which party will take the lead on the MPC. There was a proposal for an agreement between CNMI and USFWS and NMFS regarding the MPC and who takes the lead in a joint effort.

Pursuing funding for the MPC is a group effort. Financing mechanisms could include PEW, joint venture, etc.

A motion was proposed for USFWS and NMFS to work out who is the lead, or decide if co-equals, for the MPC so the MTMAC knows to whom to send information and who will be the lead for the completion of the MPC.

There was discussion regarding the motion on whether CNMI Governor Inos should write a letter about the issue of who is the lead Federal agency (USFWS or NMFS). There was a proposal that once the Federal agency is clarified there should be an MOU/MOA drafted on roles and responsibilities with respect to the MPC.

MOTION to recommend that USFWS and NMFS decide who will be the lead with regard to the MPC. Clarification is needed as to which Federal agency, NMFS or USFWS, is the lead for the planning and construction of the MPC, and to whom the MTMAC will submit the report and recommendations.

MOTION CARRIED.

## **c. Listening Sessions**

Public listening sessions (LS) and outreach for the MPC are not just a one-time event and need to be substantive, with multiple opportunities and options for public input. The CNMI team would like to take the recommendations of the MPC Subcommittee to the public.

There was discussion that trying to fulfill commitments for the MPC is important, and NMFS and CNMI believe public LS are necessary at this time. NMFS has funds to host LS and has a contractor in mind who could lead the LS. There was discussion that charts and documents need to be prepared for the presentation at LS and these documents could be developed by a contractor (funded by NMFS).

There was concern that LS might disappoint the public if not well-planned and outlined. If the LS don't include substantial information for the public, e.g., cost, funding sources/possibilities, plans, logistics, etc., the MTMAC could be raising false expectations and this can create frustration and disappointment.

The LS need to have a structure that allows for public comment. The Monument Management Plan scoping has public comments about the MPC and documented the public desires. In general, the MPC and the development of the MPC will be a component of the Monument Management Plan. There are multiple ways to guide the planning process for a MPC. There was

a discussion as to whether LS at this time may be premature, and we need more structure and substance of the MPC to present to the public at any LS.

Discussion suggesting that 5 things are important to include when going to the public: who is the responsible party; what is the process; options for cost and funding/finance; proposed timeline; the function, value, and purpose of the MPC.

Discussion as to capacity of federal agency personnel to help with LS. FWS is short-staffed but may be able to provide planning support. NMFS is better poised and is able to support facilitating the LS.

It was asked whether LS should be held in Guam or just in the CNMI, and there was discussion that the MTMAC will consider Guam-related issues with respect to the LS.

There was discussion of who is convening the LS, i.e., the MPC Subcommittee, MTMAC, NMFS, or USFWS. There was discussion that MTMAC would convene and host LS (but all members need not attend), the MPC Subcommittee would plan and staff, NMFS would provide financial support.

MOTION to recommend NMFS be the lead agency and coordinate and work with the MPC Subcommittee to plan, support logistics, and help resource the LS.

MOTION CARRIED.

**d. Discussion on MTMAC response to draft MPC Subcommittee recommendations**

A motion was proposed for the MTMAC to adopt and forward the report and recommendations submitted by the MPC Subcommittee and submit the report and recommendation to the Federal agencies: NMFS and USFWS.

Discussion regarding the motion: One recommendation of the MPC Subcommittee is for the MTMAC to hold public LS for the MPC. There was concern that LS should be done before the report and recommendations from the MPC Subcommittee are submitted to NMFS and USFWS.

It was suggested to adopt the report and recommendations of the MPC Subcommittee now, and do LS later with NMFS funding. The report and recommendations could be submitted now under as a “draft report” or “interim report.”

MOTION to recommend MTMAC to adopt the initial MPC Subcommittee draft report with its attached recommendations and submit it to USFWS and NMFS. The final report would incorporate the public input received from the LS.

MOTION CARRIED.

**10. Other Discussion Items**

Quick Response Cards (QRC)

Everyone please look at the draft QRCs and get comments to Morgan no later than April 25. Include all agency POC information. Morgan will be moving on to a different post on June 14. Josh Blocker will be taking over and will be the USCG POC for the MTMAC. Josh starts on June 7. The MTMAC thanked Morgan for all of her help in the past 3 years

#### Coordinated Management Plan (submerged lands) and Monument Management Plan (MMP)

Conversations on coordinated management plan and monument management plan are ongoing at the regional level. NMFS has started drafting the MMP/environmental assessment(EA) and has asked the USFWS for their input. USFWS is reviewing, commenting, and revising as appropriate. . USFWS and NMFS regional discussions are also ongoing related to the Territorial Submerged Lands Act.

#### Next MTMAC Meeting

The next meeting for the MTMAC will be the quarterly meeting held on June 10/11, 2014. If there is a need to discuss important issues that arise before then it is not necessary to wait for the quarterly meeting and a meeting can be scheduled. If a meeting is needed to discuss LS one will be organized, but for now the LS will be coordinated by the MPC Subcommittee and NMFS.

MOTION to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED.