



Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

NON-GOVERNMENT

Dale Sarver
Business and Commerce

David Hoffman
Citizen-At-Large

Terry O' Halloran
Commercial Shipping

Louis M. Herman, Ph.D.
Conservation

Jeanne Russell
Education

Robert Bruck
Fishing

Sara Peck
Hawai'i County

William A. Friedl
Honolulu County

Don Thornburg
Kaua'i County

Cheryl Sterling
Maui County

Kimokeo Kapahulehua
Native Hawaiian

Teri Leicher
Ocean Recreation

Marc Lammers, Ph.D.
Research

Michael Stanton
Tourism

James E. Coon
Whale Watching

GOVERNMENT

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DLNR - DAR

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LCDR Marc Young
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Rebecca Hommon
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NMFS - Law Enforcement

Chris Yates
NMFS - PIRO

Aulani Wilhelm
NWHI Reserve

SAC RETREAT MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, January 10, 2008

8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Navy Lodge, Ford Island

I. Welcome Remarks – Chair Bill Friedl

Chair Bill Friedl welcomed the group and convened the meeting. Mr. Friedl provided the council with the overall objective for the retreat. He stated his goal for the upcoming year is to initiate efforts to more closely align the council's committee activities with the sanctuary's programs. The retreat will include presentations and discussion from all of the council's committees and working groups. Bill Friedl also suggested the chairs of the committees and working groups to consider submitting monthly reports to the entire council to provide status updates on the progress of priority objectives that the Committees are beginning to identify.

II. Welcome Remarks – Admiral Tim Alexander

Admiral Tim Alexander welcomed the Sanctuary Advisory Council back to Ford Island for their second retreat on historic Ford Island. Admiral Alexander focused his remarks on the importance of the Navy's need to be able to utilize sonar to meet its training objectives. He stated that 90 percent of travel is commerce and the federal government has to preserve free movement and counter any threats that arise. New technology is posing a larger threat and submarines are moving closer to shore, which makes them harder to detect amongst other sounds.

Approximately 70% of training for anti-submarine warfare occurs in simulators; however, these simulations do not replace practice in the real environment. Training in the environment is invaluable to both aircrews and ships. Admiral Alexander said that he would like scientists to help the Navy get the science correct in determining the thresholds and harm to marine mammals. The Navy will continue to supply funding to ensure the science is credible. Admiral Alexander posed the task to the group to encourage others to obtain accurate science so the Navy can continue its training in anti-submarine warfare without harming marine wildlife.

Becky Hommon added that there is a list of 29 protective measures the Navy takes to avoid impacting marine mammals. Some organizations, such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) does not believe that these mitigations are strong enough but the Navy disagrees. The Naval Undersea Warfare Center focuses on sonar technology development and lessening consequences to marine life.

Naomi McIntosh commented that communication is important for the public to better understand these issues.

Adam Pack stated the networks that are being instituted by David Mattila and David Schofield are one avenue to educate user groups and the public. Mr. Pack also stated the sanctuary has been great in being ahead of curve. The sanctuary conducts outreach events and creates public awareness before the whales arrive. He asked if the Navy can put out more information because it seems that the activists are getting out information before the Navy can educate the public and the Navy is just in reaction mode. Becky Hommon said they have tried but it hasn't worked due to general lack of interest from the public.

Teri Leicher suggested that the council think about ways to help get information out to the public.

III. Committee Reports

A. Conservation Committee – Adam Pack

Adam Pack, Conservation Committee Member, presented at the request of Council Chair Lou Herman, the Conservation Committee's proposed priorities for 2008. Topics that have been brought to the attention of the Conservation Committee include the following: trends in ship strikes and entanglement of whales, effects of ferry operations and other vessels on humpbacks, effects of aquaculture projects in the sanctuary, status and recovery of the Hawaiian monk seal, the status and recovery of the green sea turtle, inclusion of additional species in the sanctuary, effects of dolphin watching on the local spinner dolphin population, and pollution from ship discharges.

The Conservation Committee proposed objectives for 2008 are:

- Focus principally on local issues regarding HIHWNMS
- Educate the SAC on the latest research findings on humpbacks
- Monitor the occurrence of ship strikes and entanglements - encourage measures to reduce collisions (e.g., slow speed, multiple lookouts, communication between ships)
- Educate the SAC on advancements in ship strike mitigation strategies and technologies (access experts)
- Monitor Superferry's success in carrying out whale avoidance policy (e.g. access and summarize reports)
- Monitor existing aquaculture projects for impacts on whales and other species educate the SAC on new species proposed for inclusion in the sanctuary (access experts)
- Consider how the sanctuary might further assist in monk seal protection and recovery—encourage and understand main Hawaiian Island (MHI) population in efforts to support recovery in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI)
- Consider how the sanctuary might further assist in sea turtle protection and recovery
- Continue petitioning for more adequate pump-out facilities
- Continue to offer supporting letters for effective sanctuary operations

Conservation Committee Discussion

Adam Pack asked the council what they thought about organizing another workshop on shipstrikes as an update to the workshop that was held in 2003. Funding concerns were brought up in response to the ability to hold a workshop. David Mattila mentioned that the sanctuary will be holding an International Marine Mammal Protected Area Conference in March 2009. Ship strikes are one of the most common threats to approximately 378 plus marine mammal protected areas around the world. Mr. Mattila proposed combining the shipstrike workshop with the conference. Mr. Mattila will email the prospectus and website for the conference to the council.

Terry O'Halloran asked about the sanctuary's financial resources and whether the Conservation Committee should be spending time working on additional resources. Adam Pack responded the committee needs to learn about the issues surrounding these other species to provide recommendations if these species are to be included in the sanctuary. Bill Friedl stated that this process is part of the Management Plan Review.

Jeff Walters stated the committees can be of assistance in thinking about what the role of the sanctuary could be in regards to additional marine resources.

Naomi McIntosh said that during the Conservation Committee conference call, Ed Lyman provided an overview of some of the activities the sanctuary is already doing to support the agency leads with the management of additional resources.

Council members asked Naomi McIntosh if managing additional resources was becoming burdensome and taking away from humpback whale efforts.

Jeff Walters stated the sanctuary managers will give a presentation on how sanctuary resources, including personnel, time and funding, are allocated on other resources during non-whale season. Jeff Walters said the council can make a decision about their views on how this is affecting sanctuary programs and how the council spends its time in committee meetings.

B. Research Committee – Adam Pack

Adam Pack, Research Alternate, presented on the Research Committee proposed priorities for 2008. Topics that have been brought to the attention of the Research Committee include the following: budget concerns for the sanctuary research program, inclusion of additional species in the sanctuary, whale/vessel collisions and whale entanglement concerns, ongoing concerns about aquaculture activities in sanctuary waters, updates on population numbers and recovery of humpback whales from SPLASH data.

The Research Committee proposed objectives for 2008 are:

- Write letters of support on behalf of SAC for research program activities
- Continue to educate SAC on findings with humpbacks
- Increase interaction with experts on issues to help educate Research Committee and SAC (other species, new technologies)
- First hand experience in ongoing issues (Whale Avoidance Policy in action, opportunistic site visits to aquaculture facilities)
- Identify research approaches to deal with current issues and review available data (Superferry operations)
- Deal with local issues as tasked by SAC

Bill Friedl asked Sanctuary Research Coordinator, David Mattila, what his top priorities are for sanctuary research programs in the upcoming year. Mr. Mattila responded that priorities include the following: funding to finish SPLASH (need close to \$500,000 to finish the genetics), continue mandate of monitoring humpbacks through various techniques (e.g. breath collection), and another aerial survey (Joe Mobley's last survey was done 2003).

Bill Friedl asked Adam Pack what are the primary goals for the Research Committee. Adam pack responded that it is critical for the Research Committee to educate the council about research issues surrounding the humpback whale. A goal in terms of planning is to update the vessel whale collision workshop, possibly at the protected areas conference as David Mattila suggested.

Teri Leicher asked if gathering information on shipstrikes was particular to the Superferry. Adam Pack responded it was not and notified the council that he and Marc Lammers was working on updating the historic data of reported shipstrikes with whales in Hawaiian waters. The report is now finished and they are awaiting publication. After it is published they will present the information to the council.

Adam Pack also volunteered to put together relevant humpback whale presentation information from the Marine Mammal Conference in South Africa for SAC.

Dale Sarver asked if whale watching operators collect any useful data for researchers. Adam Pack responded that operators can be of great assistance, especially in unusual events because operators have been willing to stay with the whale until researchers can arrive. He provided an example from 1996, when tour operators stayed with an adult male that died in a competitive group until researchers were able to get there. David Mattila commented that the response network is really growing. He said that individuals are able to take opportunistic photos of humpbacks staying at a 100 yard distance; these photos can be used as a source of photo-identification for individual whales on particular dates.

C. Education Committee – Liz Kumabe

Liz Kumabe, Education Alternate, presented on the proposed Education Committee priorities for 2008. Liz Kumabe discussed the numerous education programs the sanctuary is already involved in that include: school-based programs; student field experiences; Hi‘ialakai Education Cruise; student internships and mentorships; teacher and student workshops, boater outreach; lecture series; ocean awareness training; humpback whale awareness month; community outreach events; on-site education at marine mammal stranding events; signs, kiosks, and displays; whaling to watching web education; Sanctuary Ocean Count; Action Ahihi; and the sanctuary volunteer naturalist program.

The sanctuary has improved staff capabilities, improved facilities, and interagency coordination and partnerships. Some of the issues the sanctuary program has been facing where education and outreach can assist are whale-vessel collisions, entanglement and marine debris, wildlife disturbance, ocean etiquette, awareness, stewardship, and funding.

Liz Kumabe stated the following 2008 proposed goals for the Education Committee are:

- Organize the committee; help with evaluation of education programs
- Blue Seas, Green Communities initiative
- Management Plan
- Strengthen what sanctuary is already doing
- Education and outreach for other SAC initiatives

Education Committee Discussion

Liz Kumabe stated that volunteer management is a science – sanctuary staff are very involved with keeping others engaged. It is a powerful tool but it must be maintained and it does not come free.

Education needs to cover all ages; some are harder to reach, such as those that are working or elders. The Education Committee is tying its proposed goals with other SAC initiatives. The Education Committee would like to organize the Committee so that it is integrated with and can assist other SAC Committees. Evaluation and assessment is important to determine how well the programs are operating and if the sanctuary is hitting its target audience.

Bill Friedl asked Patty Miller, Maui Programs Coordinator, how the SAC’s actions could best help the Sanctuary’s education programs. Ms. Miller responded that she would like to see Maui’s education programs expanded to other islands. Ms. Miller said if council members know of people on other islands that we can connect with, it would assist in expanding programs through those partnerships. Ms. Miller will get out a list of content that is needed to the SAC to see if anyone knows where materials can be obtained (microscopes, etc.). Ms. Miller also stated the focus for sanctuary education is to expand in the field programs.

D. Aquaculture Working Group – Mike Stanton

Mike Stanton, Aquaculture Working Group Chair, presented on the proposed Aquaculture Working Group priorities for 2008. Mike Stanton provided the council with a definition of sanctuary that included a reserved area in which animals are protected. Aquaculture businesses are working in area we are trying to protect. There is growth and demand in aquaculture and the council can assist sanctuary managers with evaluating impacts.

The Aquaculture Working Group priorities and tasks include the following:

- Identify any new proposed aquaculture operation wishing to operate within sanctuary boundaries or expansion of existing operation
- Assist the sanctuary management with gathering information on the proposed operation; assist in evaluating any potential impacts
- Gather information that assists the sanctuary management in monitoring activities
- Report any known whale interactions with any aquaculture operations statewide
- Lobby and advocate for better funding and proactive leadership for the state Aquaculture Development Program (ADP)
- Create relationships with the aquaculture business operators, develop understanding of their challenges and successes; become a reliable communicator, understanding challenges and changes need to be advised
- Hawaii's aquaculture industry is in its early stages, how our relationships with the operators develop will have a major role in future mutual cooperation and confidence

Aquaculture Working Group Discussion

Mike Stanton said local relationships with site island operators can be helpful. Strong leadership is needed at the State ADP.

Bill Friedl asked whether NOAA takes hands off policy - so it becomes an issue with the state.

Dale Sarver responded that the Aquaculture Bill has been changing often; it may go through this year but language keeps getting put in that says keep all aquaculture outside sanctuaries.

Naomi McIntosh stated that any proposal should include a review of siting selection and an analysis of alternative sites. Ms. McIntosh does not know who is putting the language in, whether it is Congress or constituents. However, Hawaii appears to be at the forefront of this issue and that her concern is that decisions that are made for the humpback whale sanctuary may affect other sanctuary sites in the future.

Jeff Walters said he is in agreement with all of the Working Group's objectives yet he would like to know how the Working Group will prioritize its goals. Mr. Walters also stated that the Congressional initiative is to produce aquaculture in the EEZ; however, it is a huge challenge to grow fish in these depths so the companies come inshore where there is prime habitat for other species. Mr. Walters agrees with Naomi McIntosh that more information is needed so we can fulfill our responsibilities and he that strong leadership in the State ADP would go a long way to helping resolve these issues.

Naomi McIntosh said the sanctuary does not have independent authority to say whether aquaculture can or cannot be sited in the sanctuary. The sanctuary has provided comments to permitting agencies to request consideration for mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to humpback whales.. Funds to study the issue may provide some resolution to address the concerns and support guidelines for best practices to be developed.

Dale Sarver stated the aquaculture industry already has some of this information. Randy Cates' farm has a lot of detailed analysis on sediment and water quality but it is not digested information. Mr. Sarver said the aquaculture industry could be doing a better job at making this information more digestible to people in the community—that is the step that is not happening. Dale Sarver also stated he thinks the sanctuary and council could benefit by asking the aquaculture businesses to summarize the data or to have someone else (UH or water quality specialist) to summarize the data.

Sara Peck mentioned U.H. Sea Grant could suggest these evaluations as priorities for funding.

Jeff Walters stated he gets a report every week from Kona Blue for updates on protected species interactions and can share these reports with the council if they are interested.

E. Blue Seas, Green Communities Working Group – Teri Leicher

Teri Leicher presented on the Blue Seas, Green Communities Working Initiative. She explained Dan Basta's vision to provide the opportunity for all Americans to contribute to the protection of our Sanctuary Communities in a tri-fold initiative. First - Each SAC will form a working group to focus on "becoming a Green Community". This Working Group will become the "backbone" of the project. Second - Each Sanctuary office will work with the Working Group to identify and initiate, facilitate or enhance a project (or two) that contributes to the greening of the community. The project should have the capacity to serve as a demonstration for other coastal communities. A small amount (\$TBD) of funding will be available. Third - Depending on funding, green training for a select number of SAC members may be made available. These trainees will be expected to play an active role in the "Blue Seas, Green Communities" Initiative. The purpose of today's discussion is to talk about the initiative and whether we want to pursue this endeavor to further protect our Sanctuary Communities.

Possible project ideas for the Blue Seas, Green Communities include the following:

- Find ways for the marine industry to switch from fossil fuel to bio diesel
- Replacing high use plastic products with biodegradable products (recyclable plastic bags, cornstarch cups/plates/forks, recycled paper office supplies, etc.)
- Solar, photovoltaic, hybrid or bio-diesel use when possible
- How to use “green” practices in interaction with marine life
- Use an existing project to do monitoring at one site in other communities
- Make a list for each community for where we could purchase products that are biodegradable
- International Year of the Reef - education and outreach products
- Sustainable landscaping
- Water quality monitoring

Blue Seas, Green Communities Discussion

Cheryl Sterling said this project could be done on multiple islands and communities throughout Hawaii. Teri Leicher agreed that various projects could occur within local sanctuary communities and there could also be a main project statewide. However, the funding is non-descript and it will be difficult to determine what projects can be done without knowing how much if any funding is available. The suggestion was also made to enhance sanctuary projects that are already occurring and supporting projects that require minimal resources (funding, time, etc.) until funding for larger projects is determined.

Bill Friedl asked members if they are willing to form a Working Group. Teri Leicher volunteered to get the Working Group going. The following members and staff volunteered to be part of the working group: Marnie Meyer, Terry O'Halloran, Christine Brammer, Patty Miller, Keeley Belva, Sara Peck, Teri Leicher, Mary Grady, Bob Bruck, Cindy Barger, and Cheryl Sterling. Mary Grady will send a follow up e-mail to the SAC to determine if other members are interested in joining the Working Group.

IV. Presentations

A. Chris Yates, NOAA Fisheries – PIRO Sea Turtle Recovery Program

Chris Yates of NOAA Fisheries gave a presentation on the Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) Sea Turtle Recovery Program. Kim Maison, sea turtle biologist for NOAA Fisheries joined Chris Yates for the presentation. Mr. Yates provided a summary on sea turtle species in Hawaii, outlined the various management authorities in place to protect them, discussed the threats to sea turtles in the marine environment around Hawaii, described the PIRO's Sea Turtle Program responsibilities, and gave an overview of regional program elements and emphases.

There are five species of sea turtles found in Hawaiian waters. Hawaii coastal species include the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). Green turtles nest primarily in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI), while nesting on the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) is small and increasing; foraging also occurs around the MHI. Hawksbill turtles nest on MHI and forage around MHI. Leatherback turtles nest in Eastern and Western Pacific. Leatherbacks may interact with HI long-line fisheries along migration routes. Loggerhead turtles have both North Pacific and South Pacific populations. In the North Pacific they nest in Japan, forage in Mexico, and may interact with HI long-line fisheries along migration routes. Olive Ridley nesting occurs mainly on the Pacific coasts of Mexico and Central America. These turtles may interact with HI long-line fisheries along migration routes.

All marine turtles occurring in U.S. waters are listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Federal management responsibility shared between National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). NMFS is responsible for turtles in the marine environment, while USFWS is responsible for turtles in their terrestrial nesting environment; however, these agencies have cooperative efforts in many locations including Hawaii. Sea turtle populations have split listings according to their location. The ESA can cover a specific basin or world wide. One recommendation is to break listings into more specific listings (i.e. classify Green sea turtle based on their genetic distinctness within nesting populations).

PIRO is addressing recovery actions through research, threat mitigation, supporting local projects involved in research and threat mitigation, and outreach to increase awareness and reduce threats.

PIRO is working in cooperation with the State of Hawaii to support efforts to determine green and hawksbill turtle geographic and genetic population structure, identify critical nesting and foraging habitat, understand dispersal and movements, understand and reduce threats, and outreach to enhance awareness and conservation.

Kim Maison is trying to get support for hawksbill efforts through supporting the Hawaii Hawksbill Turtle Recovery Project, working with Hawaii Wildlife Fund on Maui, participating in the Annual Hawksbill Recovery Group Meeting, and developing outreach materials.

Discussion

Chris Yates informed the council of the workshop that was held in Honolulu in August 2007 to discuss turtle interactions with fisheries in Japan, Mexico, and Hawaii. At the workshop, a leader of the fishing cooperative in Baja stated that his boats alone are taking hundreds of loggerheads a year with their longline gear and realized the full extent of his group's impact on the population. Mary Grady stated the importance of the efforts of those involved in this workshop and the research and educational initiatives in Baja because the fishing cooperative agreed to give up their longline gear. In addition, Pro Peninsula and Ocean Conservancy raised \$10,000 for them to buy less harmful gear.

Adam Pack asked Chris Yates about his recommendations regarding sea turtles being considered for inclusion in the sanctuary. Mr. Yates responded that he thought it would be appropriate for the sanctuary to add green turtles and hawksbill turtles because of their nearshore distributions. Mr. Yates emphasized the importance of education and outreach to the public regarding sea turtle management and conservation. He said what the sanctuary is already doing for humpback whales could expand to other species such as monk seals and sea turtles. Volunteer efforts are also a necessity to manage sea turtles on beaches.

Adam Pack asked if the council could receive a copy of Mr. Yates' presentation. Mr. Yates responded that Mary Grady is welcome to distribute the presentation to any interested council members.

B. Marnie Meyer, CZMP – Ocean Resources Management Plan

Marnie Meyer of the State of Hawaii Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) presented on the State's Ocean Resources Management Plan (ORMP). The mission of CZMP is to provide comprehensive resource management, a policy umbrella for land and water use activities, and improve state and county compliance.

The ORMP was required by Chapter 205A of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) and was developed in collaboration with government agencies, with input from diverse stakeholders. A 5-year phased approach to reach long term goals (2030) and was submitted to 2007 Hawaii State Legislature.

The ORMP draws on traditional Hawaiian ecosystem management principles, relies on community and private sector involvement, promotes an adaptive learning approach, identifies responsibilities and a schedule for implementation, and emphasizes interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships.

The ORMP has a multi-perspective approach of land, sea and community. Perspective 1: Recognizing the traditional Hawaiian concept of ahupua'a management by connecting land and sea. Perspective 2: Preserving our ocean heritage by maintaining a vibrant marine environment through a management system that recognizes ecology, environmental conditions, and resource use. Perspective 3: Implementing a holistic approach to natural resource management by promoting collaboration and stewardship.

Next steps for the ORMP include implementation and further development. Implementation includes the following working group tasks: establish agency implementation priorities, develop agency work plans, identify performance indicators, develop legislative initiatives, coordinate budget requests, and report on implementation status.

Further development will incorporate traditional Moku (place-based approaches) to resource management. This will also involve evaluating challenges, needs, best practices, partnerships, resources, and recommendations for framework.

Future work will continue to evaluate integrated, place-based management and a review of concepts/framework by wider community with continuous input and analysis. An ORMP demonstration project will demonstrate ORMP implementation through an integrated, place-based management framework. The ORMP process will include identifying and developing legislation, a periodic report/evaluation of results, adjusting strategic actions as needed based on monitoring and evaluation, and updating the plan every five years.

The ORMP can be downloaded at: <http://www.hawaii.gov/dbedt/czm/>

Jeff Walters - DLNR ORMP Initiatives

Jeff Walters, Sanctuary Co-Manager, discussed the Department of Land and Natural Resources ORMP Initiatives. Five Stewardship Areas are to serve as pilot and demonstration projects: 1) Kaena Point, Oahu; 2) Ahihi Kinau, Maui; 3) Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii; 4) Haena, Kauai; and 5) Ahu O Laka, Oahu. Teams with DLNR staff from several Divisions will work together with other agencies and community groups on implementing relevant ORMP strategies at each area.

V. Discussion

Bill Friedl led a discussion on how the council could contribute to the sanctuary programs discussed throughout the day. Mr. Friedl stated that one issue that has permeated everything is the relationship with the State and moving forward with the Management Plan Review. The council could provide a recommendation for how best to proceed.

There appear to be three options for addressing additional resources:

1. Adding additional species to list for consideration – developing resources and programs to manage for those particular species under the flag of the sanctuary.
2. Consider additional species but continue to maintain current efforts
3. Not to add resources

Bill Friedl requested each committee to take up this issue and place it on their meeting agenda for the committees to discuss the options, implications, and effects on your particular area as it relates to the sanctuary and bring their findings to the council at the next meeting to consider.

Teri Leicher asked Jeff Walters and Naomi McIntosh what they feel is realistic for the program. Ms. Leicher asked the following questions: As managers, what do you want and what do you think about all the implications might be of adding resources to the program and the staff? What financial resources would the program need?

Naomi McIntosh responded that the charge of the National Marine Sanctuary is to enhance protection of resources of national significance and that our responsibility is to listen to the public and determine if there is a role the sanctuary may have to strengthen protection for those resources. If the program is able to provide enhanced support to agency partners and there strong support from the community then that would be what we would do however the program also needs to be realistic about what we can do with resources we have including staff, time, etc.

Robin Newbold said she thought there are just two options for consideration i.e. status quo (because the sanctuary is already providing management support for some other species) or expansion (include additional efforts like research on other species, etc.).

Jeff Walters expressed that he is happy that Bill Friedl is moving things forward. Mr. Walters said it is important to have the alternatives in writing before the committees start out and that he will work with Naomi and get out a few scenarios. Mary Grady will e-mail these options to the Committee Chairs for Committee discussion.

Bill Friedl stated that for the management plan review it is important to also manage the public's expectations.

Naomi McIntosh said our goal is to prepare ourselves for public scoping by ensuring that everyone is on the same page with the issues and understands the process.

Dave Hoffman asked if the sanctuary is only considering the existing boundaries. Jeff Walters replied the boundaries could change. Even if we only stick with humpback whales, the boundaries of the sanctuary will be on the table for discussion during the management plan review. Reg White agreed that because of the increasing population of whales it makes sense that boundary changes would be part of the discussion even if we just stay with whales.

Adam Pack asked if the role of the sanctuary will change based on the distribution of whales? Mr. Pack raised a question about the recent discovery of whales in the NWHI – are they “ours” or does it represent a unique wintering population? Further determinations will have to be made on whale distribution within the entire Hawaiian archipelago.

VI. SAC Tour of Hi‘ialakai and Reception

The retreat concluded with the officers and crew of the NOAA research vessel Hi‘ialakai providing the council with a tour of the NOAA ship, Hi‘ialakai. The council learned about the ship operations, research programs, and the sanctuary’s education cruise. A reception was held afterwards on the dock near the Hi‘ialakai. This location is also adjacent to the new proposed NOAA facilities on Ford Island.