Ecosystem Protections Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Date: 10/11/2011

Start Time: 2:00pm

End Time: 3:45pm

Meeting Method: Conference Call, Go-To-Webinar

Attendance:

WG members: Adam Pack (Co-Chair), Alex Sheftic, Hannah Bernard, Makaʻala Kaʻaumoana, Eric Kingma

Staff: Sarah Mesnick (facilitator), Joey Lecky (note taker), Micki Ream, Joe Paulin, Malia Chow, Jean Souza, Jon Martinez, Brenda Asuncion, Paul Wong, Sarah Courbis, Alyssa Miller (PMNM)

Public: Gordon Labedz (SAC Alternate), Nina Monasevitch, Greg Holzman

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Acronyms:
EBA = Ecosystem Based Approach
EBM = Ecosystem Based Management
HA = Holistic Approach
WG = working group
NMSA = National Marine Sanctuaries Act
PMNM = Papahanuamokuakea Marine National Monument

***Bold text indicates action items**

- Sarah M. facilitated the call at Adam's request, since he was ill.
- Sarah M. clarified that she migrated the WG draft report to the new template and incorporated comments from the WG into the text. The old version w/ all original comments is still available. Both were sent out before the call.

1. Review and Discussion of range of alternatives – pros/cons
    - Names will be removed from the final list, each pro/con will not be linked to the person(s) that submitted it.
    - The entire pro/con table will be included in the final report to the SAC as an appendix
    - Sarah suggested to poll each WG member for any final input on the pros/cons table and to "vote" on which of the 3 alternatives they favor.
    - Makaʻala:
        - EBA is the only way to have a viable management plan, it is an imperative of "this place" (Hawaiʻi) to manage with an EBA.
        - She is hopeful that HA/EBM will include more than just what is inside sanctuary boundaries. Have to include anthropogenic influences as well, people are part of the system
        - She has some concerns about how to "sell" the EBM alternative – The sanctuary going ecosystem-based sounds to the public like a "massive expansion," that will have negative impacts on their ocean use.

- Hannah:
    - In favor of EBM alternative
    - Asked about how responses from the expert opinion surveys will be folded into this pro/con analysis by the WG members, and the group's consensus
- Eric:
    - WESPAC is in favor of the status quo alternative plus the possible addition of Monk Seals as a Sanctuary Resource. However there may be room to fold in an EBA, or at least some EBM principles or components under only these 2 species (Humpbacks and Monk seals) – based on habitat, forage species, etc.
    - WESPAC is wary of the sanctuary expanding boundaries and/or trying to manage fisheries, etc
- Alex
    - In favor of EBM alternative
    - In spite of all the cons listed for this alternative (budget, conflict with other managers/users, etc) EBM is the way to go. There is a need to move forward
- Adam
    - In favor of EBM alternative, for the reasons he stated in the table

2. Defining EBM/ HA/ EBA
    - Sarah added some standard definitions of EBM and EBA to the new version of the WG recommendations report draft and condensed comments from the group into the 2 paragraphs following these definitions
    - Wording from the NMSA will be added also
    - Brenda put together a document of EBM definitions and discussion from other sanctuary sites, this doc was sent out to the group prior to the call
        - Brenda reviewed the 6 page document highlighting certain key sentences
    - Adam pointed out that the document on Monterey Bay recognized that an important part of that Sanctuary was the coordination of efforts with other agencies responsible for some aspects of EBM, - interconnectedness of resources and users/agencies
    - Hannah said that the definitions from PMNM are most relevant to Hawai'i, and recommended pulling from there
    - PMNM defines "ecological integrity"
        - Also includes a section about the Adaptive Management cycle – which was agreed is also key to EBM
        - Includes a human dimensions section and talks about uses and incorporation of traditional knowledge
    - There was a discussion about the heading in the WG document – "Preserve, Protect, and Promote Sustainable Human Uses"
        - What is the difference between "Preserve" and "Protect"? – they are often interchangeable
        - Preserve is often a loaded term – tends to make people think access will be cut off
        - Suggestion to remove preserve, change to Conserve

        - Eric suggested to just use "Protect and Promote…" then list historic, current, and future uses beneath
        - Last suggestion was to use "Perpetuate and Promote…"
        - There were some technical difficulties preventing Maka'ala from being able to speak on the call – she sent out some emails to the group with her thoughts on the definitions of Preserve, Reserve, Conserve – see her emails for exact wording. Adam reviewed Maka'ala's comments for the record.
            - Conserve – includes a suggestion of making sure something is used wisely and not depleted, i.e. Sustainable use
            - Preserve – keep something as it without changing it
    - Discussion about what is meant by "Active Management"
        - It was unclear so Sarah removed it from the WG doc
        - **The definition from the NMSA was read aloud and the group agreed this language from the NMSA should be added into the doc**
    - Adam recommended that the definitions from the other sanctuary sites should help the group in finalizing our definition and also in providing precedent. These types of background language and documents should be included in the appendix
    - Eric asked to see the language from the NMSA to ensure that the definition of "protect" is consistent with coordination with other agencies and will work for cooperation with WESPAC specifically
    - There should be explicit language about coordinating with existing agencies and avoiding duplication of effort
    - Eric asked if *everything* in the ecosystem would become a "sanctuary resource" under the HA/EBM alternative
        - Adam responded: yes, but with a caveat about coordination w/ existing agencies and other bodies already working with the resources
    - **Sarah said she would get back to everyone with a draft of the WG doc updated with the discussed language from NMSA**
        - **Sarah will also send out a written request in an email, in order to get targeted responses from WG members about this**

3. Review Responses from Technical Experts Survey
    - A few more responses have come in since the last call, Sarah is expecting many more to come in the next week or two
    - Sarah skimmed through the responses received so far and summarized key points
    - Frank Parrish's response said that EBM often fails to identify priorities, it can sometimes be so broad in scope that nothing ever gets done
        - Adam noted that this points is very important for the group to keep in mind
        - This could be included in the group's recommendations
    - In response to expert opinion about mesophotic coral, Hannah said out that many deep areas in the Au'Au channel that are not surveyed often, because of the depth, are still affected by impacts from shore such as nutrient loading and algae blooms, etc, contrary to common knowledge

- **Sarah asked the group to take a look at the expert opinion received so far and what the group has come up with in more detail in order to discuss on next call**
- **Adam asked that someone (staff?) take a stab at a paragraph that pulls together key sentences and language from other Sanctuary sites' definitions**

4. Public Comment

Gordon Labedz:

- Group spent so much time discussing semantics of "preserve," "protect," etc., should think about semantics of the word "sanctuary" – spent 2 hours word-smithing and not talking about how the sanctuary will act as a sanctuary and actually protect ocean resources
    - At the end of the day, will the ocean be in better or worse condition?
    - If this new management plan doesn't provide any real change or positive effects on the ocean, then the sanctuary should close up shop and give its budget to social security
- Prioritization is key – in the face of limited budgets and resources, sanctuary must focus on specific goals with specific methods, i.e. Regulations

Nina Menasevitch:

- Would like to second all of Gordon's comments
- She has 33 years of diving experience on Kauai and has seen the shocking decline in marine resources – fish, etc – over the years
- Recommends that the group doesn't get bogged down in wording and instead focus on tangible things. Suggested designating MPAs

Greg Holzman

- Has differing concerns from other two members of public. He is an "extractor" – has been a fisherman for 30 years
- He is advocating for people who utilize the ocean as a food source. The ocean is a very important resource to Hawai'i. Non-extraction of resources is not beneficial to Hawai'i and should not be an option. Gordon does not eat fish.
- Pointed out that we already have MPAs, BRFAs, etc in Hawai'i. He has been down on a sub to look at a seamount within a BRFA and they could not see any damage (broken coral) from bottom fishing. Cited Jeff Drazen as a reference for this and said tapes of the expedition could be reviewed
- There is a massive roi population exploding on Niihau. He recommends that the sanctuary take action to address invasive species problems, specifically ta'ape, roi, and toaau
- Maybe near shore fisheries are overexploited but not all fisheries – cutting off all extraction should not be an option

WG recommendations report is due on Oct. 29th

Expect a "flurry of activity" in the next two weeks

Next meeting: Oct. 25th, 2011 at 2:00pm