

Brief History of the Western Pacific Region

Information from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

US Western Pacific History

Islands in the Western Pacific Region have unique political relationships with the United States. These political relationships were forged in the twentieth century following the establishment of supremacy of US Pacific Fleet in 1898. For nearly three centuries Spain was a powerful colonial force in the Pacific Ocean. The European powers shared uneasy alliances and established colonies in islands and territories of the Pacific. In the nineteenth century the US began to build their naval power and in 1898 the US Asiatic squadron attacked and defeated the Spanish Fleet in the Pacific at Manila Bay signaling the arrival of the US as the new power in the Pacific.

Each island territorial area has a similar history of discovery and settlement by the first people and a similar dependence on the marine environment for their survival but their colonial histories vary. The details of their resource utilization are different, developed and based on long practice in isolation.

The Polynesian History

Samoa and Hawaii are part of the Polynesian triangle. Hawaii is the northern apex of the triangle. Samoa lies near the western edge of the triangle, the North-South line from Hawaii to Aotearoa - New Zealand. The area of the Pacific known as the Polynesian triangle was populated by seafaring people who shared a common language and culture. 40,000 years ago the Polynesian people living on the Pacific edge of Asia, voyaged into the Pacific Ocean and populated an area of nearly 5,000,000 square miles. By the time Europeans began to travel the oceans, Polynesians had settled onto all of the habitable land in Polynesia. Over millennia, isolated populations differentiated and diverged into distinct cultures. Each island area developed distinct cultural differences in response to the unique environment in which they evolved. The aboriginal people of Hawaii and Samoa, sharing the same proto-Polynesian history, developed cultural and customary practices that are different enough to distinguish one group from the other. Additionally, recent history causes a further divergence between the two groups and from their common ancestral culture.

American Samoa

American Samoa is over 89% native Samoan, that is they are descended from the aboriginal people, who prior to discovery by Europeans, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area now known as Samoa. A further division, a political one, divides Eastern and Western Samoa. Eastern Samoa is known as American Samoa. For the purposes of the Magnuson Stevens Act, American Samoa is an eligible community for service under the Community Development and the Community Demonstration Project Program.

American Samoa is a territory of the United States through their deeds of cession. In the late nineteenth century Germany and the United States divided the Samoan archipelago into

eastern Samoa to the US and Western Samoa to Germany. The chiefs of Eastern Samoa deeded their islands to the United States. Two deeds of cession were executed in Eastern Samoa - Tutuila and Manu`a islands deeds of cession. American Samoa is an unincorporated and unorganized territory of the United States. American Samoa's economy is dependent on the export of canned tuna that makes up 93% of their economy. The tuna is mostly supplied by foreign fishing. The 2000 census found that the ethnicity of American Samoa was native Pacific islander 92.9%, Asian 2.9%, white 1.2%, mixed 2.8%, and other 0.2%. The population is estimated at 57,881 (July, 2005).

The five volcanic islands, which are the major inhabited islands of American Samoa, are Tutuila, Aunu'u, Ofu, Olosega and Ta'u. Tutuila, the largest island, is the center of government and business. Aunu'u, a satellite of Tutuila, lies 1 mile off the coast of Tutuila. The 3 islands of Ofu, Olosega and Ta'u, collectively referred to as the Manu'a islands, lie 70 miles east of Tutuila. Olosega (Swains atoll) with a population of approximately 30 lies 240 miles north of Tutuila, and the uninhabited Rose Atoll is a national sanctuary preserve 180 miles to the east.

American Samoa, because of the excellent harbor at PagoPago, Tutuila, has been a US territory since 1899. New Zealand occupied Western Samoa in 1914 and in 1962 Western Samoa gained independence. In 1997 Western Samoa changed its name to Samoa. The Demarcation between Samoa and American Samoa is political. Cultural and commercial exchange continues with families living and commuting between both Samoa's.

Approximately 95% of the landmass in American Samoa is held under the traditional land tenure system and under the direct authority of the Samoan chiefs known as "matais". Under this system, traditional land cannot be purchased or sold and the current reigning chief from within the family unit has final say over the disposition of a family's holdings. This system ensures the passage of assets to future generations and serves as the catalyst in the preservation of the Samoan culture.

American Samoa has a non-voting representative in the House of Representatives, Eni Faleomavaega

Hawaii

The Hawaiian Archipelago comprises 132 islands, reefs and shoals, stretching 1,523 miles (2,451 kilometers) southeast to northwest across the Tropic of Cancer between 154 40' to 178 25' W longitude and 18 54' to 28 15' N latitude. The Hawaiian islands consists approximately of a total land area of 6,425 square miles. One percent of the land area is made up of islands off the shores of the main islands, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, from Kure Atoll in the North to Nihoa in the South, Palmyra Island, Midway and Wake Islands. The Hawaiian Islands extends over a vast area of the Pacific Ocean, possessing a 12 mile Territorial Sea, and the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone.

The islands of the State of Hawaii were discovered and settled by Polynesians between the third and seventh centuries A.D. Captain James Cook, the first European to reach Hawaii, arrived in 1778. Europeans and Asians began to settle on the islands in the nineteenth century

with the development of pineapple and sugar plantations. On January 16, 1893, the Hawaiian Kingdom was deposed and overthrown by a self-proclaimed "Committee of Safety," made up of non-Hawaiian businessmen, planters and missionary descendants, with the complicity U.S. minister John L. Stevens. Minister Stevens caused the landing of U.S. Marines to support the overthrow and on January 17th the U.S. Minister recognized the proclamation of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government sought immediate annexation of Hawaii to the United States. Failing annexation, the Provisional Government proclaimed the Republic of Hawaii. On July 7, 1898, the Republic of Hawaii was annexed by joint Resolution, the Newlands Resolution, and the islands were ceded to the United States.

Hawaii's electorate chose statehood over territory in August of 1959 and became the 50th State of the United States. 21% of the population of Hawaii is descended from the aboriginal people that occupied and exercised sovereignty, prior to 1778, in the area now known as the State of Hawaii.

In 1998, Hawaii's ethnic makeup was 22% Caucasian, 21% Hawaiian or part Hawaiian, 18% Japanese, 13% Filipino, 7.3% Hispanic (1990), 3% Chinese, and 1% African-American; other ethnicities made up the balance. (However, Office of Hawaiian Affairs data reveals that a significant part of the population lists their ethnicity as "other/unknown.") Hawaii's population has been growing at the rate of 7% during the past decade, and was estimated to be 1,193,001 in 1998. By most statistical measures, people of Native Hawaiian ancestry have the lowest incomes and poorest health of any ethnic group in the State. Federal, state, and private programs have been established to benefit Hawaiians. There is also an active cultural renaissance among Native Hawaiians, with efforts to restore the language, arts, and subsistence activities, including traditional fishing practices. As part of this renaissance, Native Hawaiians continue to assert their rights of access to oceanic resources.

In the State of Hawaii, 73% of the entire population resides on O`ahu. O`ahu has only one county, the City and County of Honolulu. The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and Kalaupapa, Moloka`i were under the jurisdiction of the City and County of Honolulu. The eight major islands are Hawai`i, Maui, Moloka`i, Lana`i, Kaho`olawe, O`ahu, Kaua`i and Ni`ihau. With the majority of the population, seat of government, center of commerce, harbors and military installations, O`ahu, called `The Gathering Place,` is the center of Hawaii.

The native Hawaiian community through the seventies and eighties joined the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement and began to establish their own unique character and identity. The period of the seventies to the present is often called the "Hawaiian Renaissance" with renewed interest in Hawaiian culture, arts, language and history. Agencies and organizations to benefit native Hawaiians grew out of the new cultural awareness. Older agencies and organizations grew in participation and strength. The development of Hawaiian arts and sciences gave rise to educational and cultural opportunities. Expectations for the Hawaiian community have grown. A protracted discussion is developing as to what form of recognition is to be afforded to Hawaii's national history.

For the purposes of the Magnuson Stevens Act, each island is determined to be a fishing community.

The Mariana Archipelago

Guam and the Mariana Islands are located in that part of Oceania known as Micronesia. The Chamorro language is from the Austronesian language group, the same proto-language from which Malaysian, Indonesian and Palauan languages are derived. Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands are believed to have been settled 3,000 years ago. The culture is explained as resulting from settlement in two waves of seafaring people. The waves are demarcated by the existence of “*latte*” stones. “*Latte*” stones came into existence about 500 A.D. and the pre-history is divided into pre-*latte* and *latte* stone eras. The *latte* stones are ancient constructions consisting of a limestone column capped with a large coral head from five to twenty feet in height and eighteen feet in diameter. Their use is only conjectured. It is known that they mark burial sites. The burials indicate familial or kinship relationships with the constructors of the *latte*.

The Mariana Archipelago was discovered by Spain in 1521. That encounter with Magellan was short and violent. In 1565 the archipelago was claimed for Spain by Legaspi. It wasn't until the mid to late 17th century that a colony was established with Spanish Catholic lay and professional religious to convert the native people to Christianity. In 1668, Spanish military was sent to protect the missionaries. The results were disastrous. In less than a century the indigenous population was reduced from an estimated 40,000 to about 1,500 to 3,000 individuals clustered in parishes in Guam and Saipan. The missionary outpost in Saipan was closed in 1730. “Reduction” was believed to make instruction in Christianity more efficient. During the late 18th and 19th century, the Chamorro population recovered in fits and starts, coping with epidemics, typhoons, earthquakes and food shortages.

During the 19th century Carolinians from what is now Yap and Truk states in the Federated States of Micronesia were encouraged to settle in the Mariana islands by Spain. The Carolinians stayed away from centers of Spanish activity and formed small enclaves on the islands. By 1880, the Spanish prohibited the sailing of canoes around the Mariana islands. However, the Carolinians continued their ocean-going sailing traditions and still retain them, unlike the Chamorro who suffered immense losses under Spanish colonial rule.

CNMI

The Northern Mariana Islands was under US administration as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific, the people of the Northern Mariana Islands decided in the 1970s not to seek independence but instead to forge closer links with the US. Negotiations for territorial status began in 1972. A covenant to establish a commonwealth in political union with the US was approved in 1975. A new government and constitution went into effect in 1978.

CNMI's economy benefits substantially from US financial. Tourism is a key industry that employs about 50% of the work force and accounts for roughly one-fourth of CNMI's gross domestic product of \$900 million. Annual visitor figures are over 500,000. Japanese tourists predominate. Garment production is by far the most important industry with employment of 17,500 mostly Chinese workers and sizable shipments to the US under duty and quota exemptions; however these exemptions have not been renewed by Congress.

With a population of 80,362 (2005 estimate), CNMI's ethnic mix is diverse 56.3% Asian, 36.3% Pacific islander, 1.8% Caucasian, 0.8% other and 4.8% mixed (2000 census).

The Northern Mariana Islands was part of the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, administered by the U.S., before becoming a commonwealth by plebiscite in 1998. The Northern Mariana Islands comprise ten islands; Farallon de Pajaros (Uracas), Maug, Asuncion, Agrihan, Pagan, Alamagan, Guguan, Sariguan, Anatahan, Farallon de Medinilla, Saipan, Tinian, Aguiguan, Rota. It has a total land area of 179 square miles spread over 264,000 square miles of ocean. There are three main islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, with the majority of the population residing on the island of Saipan. The southernmost island, Rota, lies some 50 miles northeast of Guam and 430 miles south of CNMI's northernmost island, Farallon de Pajaros (Uracas). The small islands of the northern part of the chain are lightly populated. In 1990, the population of the northern islands was 36, but has dwindled down to only 6 according to 2000 Census Bureau Data. The main islands are grouped together in the southern part of the chain. The Commonwealth's capital is Saipan, but no locality on that island is recognized specifically as the capital. Several government offices are located in the Census Designated Place of Capital Hill, but the legislature meets in Susupe. Ninety percent of its 69,221 (2000 census) residents live on the island of Saipan and almost all the rest on Tinian and Rota. Chamorro is the most commonly spoken native language. The 2000 census indicates that 3.8% of the population is Carolinian and 21.3% is Chamorro.

At the end of the Spanish-American war, a defeated Spain sold all of the Mariana Islands, Caroline Islands and Palau to Germany in 1899. Under Germany, agriculture and fishing was developed. Germany supported copra and coconut production and recruited Carolinian people from the islands of Chuuk and Yap as well as Japan. Japanese immigrants developed commerce in agriculture and sugar cane and controlled the trade in the Northern Marianas. In the aftermath of World War One, Japan became the administrator of the islands under the League of Nations. Political tensions between the United States and Japan led to declarations of war, and control over the islands changed. In 1944, American forces secured the islands from the Japan after one of World War II's bloodiest battles. Only a few Japanese survived. Hundreds of Japanese civilians, including women and children, jumped to their deaths from the cliffs of Marpi, rather than submit to the opposing forces. These cliffs are marked with monuments to their sacrifices. America took charge of reconstructing the Northern Marianas Islands. In 1947 the United States Navy was charged with administration of the islands after the newly formed United Nations gave the U.S. trusteeship over the Mariana Islands. In 1951, President Truman entrusted the United States Department of the Interior to administer the islands under the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. During the Trust Territory years, the U.S. government restricted entry to the Northern Islands and used the islands for various military training activities. Most of Tinian, still, is reserved for potential U.S. military use.

Discussion on the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement began in 1970. In 1975 a plebiscite was held, and 78% percent of the votes opted for a negotiated Covenant with the United States. The "Covenant to Establish A Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands in Political Union with the United States of America" is a negotiated agreement between the United States Government and the people of the Northern Marianas Islands. The Covenant is the document that defines the relationship between these two political entities.

The Covenant was signed in 1978. That year, the first elected governor began his first term in office. The people of the Northern Marianas were granted United States citizenship in 1986. Under the terms of the Covenant, citizens of the self-governing Commonwealth are not allowed to vote in U.S. presidential elections, but they enjoy all of the other benefits of U.S. citizenship. The Commonwealth elects a resident representative to the United States. The question of whether to seek a non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress is being hotly debated.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands benefits significantly from the Covenant agreement. It controls its own immigration, labor, tax and wage laws.

Guam

The military installation on Guam is one of the most strategically important US bases in the Pacific. Guam is dependent on military spending, tourism and exports of fish and handicrafts. Japanese tourists make up 90% of their tourist market. Guam has a visitor count of over 1 million annually. With a gross domestic product of \$3.2 billion annually, Guam receives large transfer payments from the US Federal Treasury (\$143 million in 1997) into which Guamanians pay no income or excise taxes. Under the provisions of a special law of Congress, the Guam Treasury, rather than the US Treasury, receives federal income taxes paid by military and civilian Federal employees stationed in Guam

Guam is an organized, unincorporated territory of the US having organized under the Guam Organic Act of 1 August 1950.

Based on the 2000 Census, Guam's population is ethnically: 37.1% Chamorro, 26.3% Filipino, 11.3% other Pacific islander, 6.9% white, 6.3% other Asian, 2.3% other ethnic origin or race, 9.8% mixed in a total population of 168,564 (2005 estimate).

Guam has a non-voting member of the House Representatives.

Guam and the Mariana Islands were first settled about 3,000 years ago, but their present social and demographic structure is largely the result of colonial experiences of the last 300 years. Guam's total population is estimated to have reached 154,000 in 1999, nearly doubling the 1970 total of 85,000. Based on the 2000 Census data 37% of the population is Chamorro.

The U.S. acquired Guam in 1898, following the Spanish-American War. After the end of World War II, wage work enabled some fishermen to acquire small boats with outboard engines and other equipment for offshore fishing. As late as the 1970's, relatively few people in Guam fished offshore, even on the protected leeward side of the island, because boats and deep-sea fishing equipment were too expensive for most people.

In the decades following the end of World War II, the ethnic composition of Guam's population changed markedly. By 1980, less than half of the inhabitants were Chamorros. In the late 1970's, a group of Vietnamese refugees living on Guam fished commercially on a large scale, verifying the market potential for locally-caught reef fish, bottomfish, tuna, and mackerel. The Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association began operations during that time. Until the co-op established a small marketing facility at the Public Market in Agana,

fishermen were forced to make their own individual marketing arrangements after returning from fishing trips. In 1980, the co-op acquired a chill box and ice machine, and emphasized wholesaling. Today, the co-op's membership includes over 160 full-time and part-time fishermen, and it processes and markets (retail and wholesale) an estimated 80% of the local commercial catch. Guam's tourism industry grew in the 1980's and continues to grow servicing the growing Asian tourist market.

Over the centuries of acculturation, beginning with the Spanish conquest in the late seventeenth century, many elements of traditional Chamorro and Carolinian culture in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands were lost. But certain traditional values and attitudes were retained and have been melded with elements of Western culture that are now a part of local life and custom.

For the purposes of the Magnuson Stevens Act, in Hawaii, Guam and CNMI, Demonstration Projects may be judged by the advisory panel whether culturally appropriate and beneficial to the native community. In American Samoa, with an aboriginal population of 89%, all projects submitted may be judged by the advisory panel to be culturally appropriate and ranking, within the island area, should be based upon its benefit to the community.

History of the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program

Since 1976, the Council has continuously been involved in the discussion of native fishing rights in American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and Hawaii. Through our involvement and discussions of this issue with indigenous people, we learned there was a similar dependence of aboriginal people across the region on the sea to fulfill their nutritional and other needs. However, each island area has different histories, different aspirations and different objectives that they want to achieve through the expression of native rights.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) developed and supported the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program (CDPP) and the western Pacific Community Development Program through its inclusion in the Sustainable Fisheries Act in 1996. Since 1997 the Council has worked to make the CDPP and the Community Development Program (M-S Act, Section 305 (i) (2)) a reality. The Council's indigenous program seeks to address the right of the aboriginal people of the US Western Pacific to demonstrate and exercise their traditional and customary practices.

The 1996 Sustainable Fisheries Act re-authorized the M-S Act and included extensive revisions and additions and mandated deadlines for actions by the Fishery Management Councils and National Marine Fisheries Service. Establishing the Western Pacific Community Demonstration Project Program took an enormous effort by the Council, National Marine Fishery Service, NMFS Pacific Islands Area Office (now the Pacific Islands Regional Office) in defining of terms, describing and establishing process, developing priorities, refining eligibility criteria and generating support from Washington, DC, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawaii.

Two and a half million dollars had been received for this program. A first solicitation for CDPP proposals was published in the Federal Register on April 16, 2002 and closed on June

17, 2002. The first solicitation awards \$500,000 for three to five demonstration projects. Fifteen project proposals were transmitted from the National Marine Fisheries Service for Council review July 2, 2002. The Council's Advisory Panel reviewed and ranked the proposals and reported their recommendations to the Council in August 2002. The Council reviewed and refined these recommendations for transmittal to the National Marine Fisheries Service in October 2002. The Council recommended four projects, one from each island area, for funding. Refinement of the process described in the published Federal Register notice raised the degree of difficulty for implementing the program. The original two step process requested proposals to be made available for Council review. After the Council review, recommended applicants were to be given training to complete their applications. Completed applications by selected applicants would be transmitted from the Council to NMFS. However, it was determined that all applicants were to receive the same opportunity to be trained in the application process. Due to time and budget constraints, the Council was unable to provide this broader training and thus all applicants were contacted and directed to complete the forms necessary to accompany their proposals. Since the solicitation was closed, to maintain fairness in the competition for grant awards, no applicants were allowed to rewrite their proposals. This resulted in a poor showing for the first solicitation.

The announcement of the first awards was made on March 22, 2004. Awards were made to projects in Guam, CNMI and Hawaii. Guam and CNMI have received their awards and have started their projects. Hawaii projects are adjusting their projects as needed because the lapse of time between their application and final award has changed. Objectives and scopes of work changed as the projects moved forward and project tasks were completed. Delays in funding caused changes in the situation and circumstances of projects, i.e., changes in in-kind services, changes in matching fund proposals and changes in project community and organizational partnerships.

A second solicitation was developed to be published by the summer 2003. On July 7, 2004 the draft Federal Register Notice was received at the Council for comment. This second solicitation built upon the first solicitation and include refinements and improvements gained from the experience of the first solicitation. Funding priorities were changed. Adjustments were made to the presentation to take into account losses suffered in credibility and support for the program.

A second solicitation was published August 26, 2004, closing October 29, 2004. A third solicitation was published February 1, 2005, closing March 15, 2005. A fourth solicitation was published in the June 30, 2005 NOAA Omnibus announcement of availability of funds closing on October 28, 2005. The fourth solicitation was published in expectation of receiving funding for fiscal 2006, however an appropriation for this program was not made for 2006.