

# Pohnpei State, FSM Fisheries Symposium

## October 23-27, 2017

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## **Executive Summary**

Pohnpei State has seen alarming decline in its coastal fisheries over the last 15 plus years as scientist studying the Coast Fisheries of Pohnpei State such as Dr. Kevin Rohdes and others will attest to. Even over the last 15 years communities and partners both regional and state have made huge effort to curb this problem, but efforts prove to be not enough. Much work still needs to be done is what the Director of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei Mr. Eugene Joseph will say. On October 25th to the 27th marks a historic moment in Pohnpei State, as for the first time, the State held its first ever fisheries Symposium at the College of Micronesia in Palikir, Pohnpei. The goals and objectives are as follows: Goal: Bring Pohnpei together to discuss its fisheries status, come up with solutions, and commit to working together to implement a uniformed work plan. Objectives: 1. Increase knowledge and awareness around Pohnpei's fisheries status, current policies and remaining gaps. 2. Update Pohnpei's fisheries work plan based on current information, priorities, and resources. 3. Leveraging financial and technical support for Pohnpei State Coastal Fisheries work plan implementation. The event was hosted by the State of Pohnpei led by the Director of Resources and Development in partnership with the Conservation Society of Pohnpei and many other regional and local partners and communities. It brought together scientific experts such as Dr. Kevin Rohdes, Dr. Lindsay Chapman from SPC and many others to share the latest science and status of Pohnpei Fisheries with State and Local Government Actors and the NGO partners to what solutions can be put forward in an action plan that everyone can unite to support to help reverse the trend of decline in the States Fisheries. PIMPAC as a active supporter in local practioners capacity development for Marine Protected Area Management was invited as a key facilitator and contributor to this historic event. Mr. Wayne Andrew along with Mr. Angel Jonathan who have helped advance PIMPACs capacity development program in the State were invited as facilitators and supporters to the symposium. What is worth noting is that the event concluded with a strong call to action document that was endorsed by the Governor and Speaker of the State of Pohnpei highlighting the need for science, traditional knowledge, culture, transparency, and effective policy as key ingredients to a united plan of action forward. The symposium call to action now awaits a new fisheries workplan that is being formulated by a working group using information and inputs from the symposium as a response to the call to action made by the State Leadership. This plan is anticipated to be bold and realistic to the needs an current capacity gaps of the State.

## **Background**

The Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community (PIMPAC) began in 2005 as a pilot program to identify and address the unique set of challenges faced by Marine Protected Area (MPA) managers in the region. These challenges include limitations in human and financial resources, isolation from one another restricting the ability of managers to learn from and apply approaches that have been successful elsewhere, and building on traditional management approaches while adapting to modern technology and practices. PIMPAC was designed to address these challenges and support an on-going capacity development framework for site based conservation practitioners to gain skills, learn from one another, and share resources; ultimately to improve site based management effectiveness. PIMPAC did not

develop its own conservation goals, rather aimed to support local and regional conservation initiatives including the following.

- **Micronesia Challenge:** In 2006, Micronesian leaders from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands committed to “effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020”. This, known as the Micronesia Challenge (MC), is a regionally led conservation initiative that provided a conservation target that PIMPAC could aim to support through capacity development.
- **Aloha + Challenge, and Sustainable Hawaii Initiative:** In Hawaii, government leaders in combination with community partners set ambitious goals through the Aloha + Challenge, and Sustainable Hawaii Initiative that include goals such as “effectively manage 30% of near shore ocean waters by 2030” and “protect 30% of priority watersheds by 2030”.

Conservation Society of Pohnpei in partnership with the Pohnpei State Government and other regional partners such as MCT, Rare, TNC, and SPREP organized a Statewide Fisheries Symposium from October 23-27, 2017. This is part of the partners efforts to bring together regional experts, local fishermen, national and state agencies and partners to better understand challenges facing the State of Pohnpei on its declining fisheries and to develop a common commitment to working across all levels in addressing the problem. PIMPAC over the past 10 years have invested heavily in Pohnpei MPA's capacity building for site and partner practitioners. Because of this, Mr. Wayne Andrew and Angel Jonathan as PIMPAC Regional Mentors were invited to help facilitate these urgent discussions on issues such as management planning for MPA's and enforcement. Mr. Andrew and Jonathan were able to present this request to PIMPAC Regional Coordinator for approval since they have great experiences in these areas and PIMPAC will continue to support efforts in Pohnpei into the future.

#### **Day One (Monday October 23, 2017)**

Mr. Andrew arrived into Pohnpei in the afternoon and met with Mr. Angel Jonathan. Both facilitators reviewed the agenda for the workshop and strategized their roles. Mr. Andrew will support the discussion on enforcement and management planning and Mr. Jonathan will support the working group on community role and capacity development. This decision was based on each team member's experience. They both also took some time in the evening to meet with other CSP partners to discuss logistics and other areas of support for the symposium.

#### **Day Two (Tuesday October 24, 2017)**

On Tuesday both facilitators Mr. Andrew and Mr. Jonathan visited the venue of the symposium at the College of Micronesia in Palikir. At the visit to the venue they met with Ms. Vanessa Fread with the FSM National Government Ridge to Reef Project and Ms. Mary-Linda Salvador with CSP who were in charge of the logistics of the workshop as well as program. They were briefed and then both facilitators met with other partners and community leaders to get updates on progress of site based work previously supported through PIMPAC. Mr. Kesdy Ladore provided much insight to the work with Kitti and U Municipalities related to MPA management and fisheries management planning. It was reported that U has taken huge

strides in the implementation of their municipal wide fisheries management plan by advertising for a coordinator position to be based at the municipal office who will be in charge of implementing the plan and coordinating support and resources to the Tehphek-Takaiou MPA that is lead by Kelak Takaiou (Mr. Pedrus Primo who is the village Chief of Takaiou). It was also reported that Kitti also has made progress on their recently adopted fisheries management plan by completing a Guard House for the Nathik MPA, holding discussion on how to improve spatial planning for the site to perhaps increase its size and connection with different habitats. The Community of Enipein is spearheading the building of a local community learning center (Nahs) that is funded by Seacology through CSP. All these efforts help the communities in Kitti implement actions laid out in their fisheries plan.

**Day Three (Wednesday October 25, 2017)**

The symposium was opened by the Director of Resources and Development who on behalf of the Governor of Pohnpei State welcomed all the participants to the symposium and called on them to be open in sharing ideas on how to address this looming problem of fisheries collapse. Mr. Eugene Joseph, Executive Director of CSP then with acting Director of Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture presented the status and trend of declining fisheries in Pohnpei as well as highlights from past and current management efforts.



**Director of Resources and Development (left) and Conservation Society of Pohnpei (right) welcoming participants and presenting the status of the States Fisheries.**

In the afternoon, the scientific community shared insights to what the data and the science behind all of that is saying. This presentation included what we are doing wrong and how we can improve management moving forward. A case study from the Northern Reefs Project in Palau was presented by Mr. Masubed Tkel from the TNC. This highlighted potential opportunities for lessons learned and sharing that could help the working groups in breakout groups how what other possible solutions they could propose.

**Day Four (Thursday October 26, 2017)**

On the second day of the symposium, the organizers set up six working groups that included: community, management, science, policy and governance, capacity building, and enforcement. The participants were asked to review what are main challenges that are faced current, or on the horizon and what are the possible solutions. In the afternoon, the groups were asked to present their findings back in plenary. The other working groups were asked to give inputs and comments to the presentations.

At lunch time, Mr. Wayne Andrew and Angel Jonathan met with Pohnpei State Ridge to Reef Coordinator Mr. Jorg Anson, Marine Program Manager of CSP Mr. Kesdy Ladore, MPA Network Coordinator at CSP Mr. Douglas Kusto, and Mr. Francisco Sohl with the Palikir Pass MPA community of Sokehs. This meeting was to update the partners on where they are at in the engagement process of this newly legislated MPA and the largest MPA in Pohnpei State. It was clear that CSP has initiated the dialouge with the community leadership and will move to the next stage of the process where they will begin the formation of planning team to begin the management planning process. Mr. Sohl was very excited about the progress and proposed so follow up meetings to be held with his community leadership to deepen their understanding before planning starts. He officially recognized PIMPAC's management planning facilitation team's effort in supporting the development of plans for the MPA's in Pohnpei and continued to seek PIMPAC assistance in this effort as it will be the first time to engage his municipal leaders and because of the scale and impact of the MPA. He wants to be sure his community has the right support of facilitators and experience that is needed to navigate them forward. It is envision that a follow up support will be put forward to PIMPAC to help mentor local partners in this engagement with the Palikir Pass MPA. The next steps were, CSP will work with Mr. Sohl to do a couple of leadership engagement to ensure full awareness of the process and secure their blessing in moving forward by appointing a planning team. This could be from November to December 2017, depending on their readiness. Once this has taken place, then CSP will coordinate with Mr. Andrew and Jonathan for a management planning engagement where their experience and expertise is needed and this could be in December or early 2018.

In the afternoon, the working groups presented their recommendations and were given feedback in plenary. Mr. Andrew and Jonathan co-facilitated different sessions including enforcement, community, capacity building, and management. At the conclusion of the presentations, Mr. Eugene Joseph with the Acting Director of OFA appointed a small working group to put forward the issues in a CALL TO ACTION STATEMENT, to be reviewed by the Governor and Speaker for their full endorsement. Mr. Andrew and Jonathan were assigned to the working group and together with other members drafted a Call To Action Statement that was later shared reviewed and edited for final approval.

#### **Day Five (Friday October 27, 2017)**

On the final day of the symposium, the working group met to finalize the Call To Action Statement and at 11am Governor Marcello Peterson and Speaker Fernando Scalliem made their congratulator statements urging all parties to use the momentum created by the symposium to work together to address this important problem of declining fisheries and signed the Call to Action Statement (**see statement attached**).

In the evening, a closing reception was held at South Park Resort where Speaker and Governor present congratulated the participants for their hard work over the three days. Governor Peterson urged the participants to take action beginning with each individual to each family, extended family, community and partners. Small positive actions slowly aggregate to bigger impacts and that should be the way we move forward.



**Participants of the symposium at the closing ceremony held at South Park Hotel in Pohnpei.**

#### **Day Six (Saturday October 28, 2017)**

On Saturday, the PIMPAC Team prepared to head to Chuuk for another week of training at Parem Municipality with different communities in partnership with Rare Micronesia and to support planning meeting with Onei community in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The PIMPAC Team met briefly with Mr. Michael Guilbeaux to get updated on the work in Chuuk and to understand the setting and to clarify roles and responsibilities of the Team as it relates to the intended outcomes from visit.

#### **Outcomes**

1. Pohnpei State Government, Municipal and Village level communities and regional and local partners are on the same page with declining in fisheries and the main drivers.
2. Pohnpei State has made a Call To Action Statement that shows their commitment to leading the effort in addressing coastal overfishing issues on Pohnpei.
3. Symposium participants has also highlighted some opportunities of support including learning exchanges with Palau and potential funding opportunities such as GEF and GCF through national and regional partners.
4. PIMPAC efforts has made some impact but, more has to be done in terms of policy, governance especially on sustainable financing of local efforts.

#### **Next Steps**

1. Pohnpei State and other partners will formulate a response statement to the call to Action Statement from the Leadership.
2. Learning exchanges will be planned and conducted to increase capacity and motivation to champion efforts from different levels.
3. State and local partners to work closely with national and regional partners to secure more technical and financial resource for the actions forward.

4. PIMPAC will work with CSP to plan a follow up mentoring support for the engagement and development of the Palikir Pass MPA management plan.