

Marine and Coastal Zone Advocacy Council (MACZAC) / Ke Kahu O Na Kumu Wai

MINUTES

Friday, October 20, 2023: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

OPSD Conference Room
State Office Tower, 6th Floor
235 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

[Link to the electronic video recording of the meeting:](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/KbAcVJbHUM2h7_zG3ImpjPT6fl2ae1NxxMZN4wC9VoVhEgCBLtP-BobwOJuTG9XG.rBjj5xVRytjMeGd-)

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/KbAcVJbHUM2h7_zG3ImpjPT6fl2ae1NxxMZN4wC9VoVhEgCBLtP-BobwOJuTG9XG.rBjj5xVRytjMeGd-

ATTENDANCE

- **Members present (8):** Phil Fernandez, Donna Brown, Denver Coon, Taryn Dizon, Robert “Bob” Nishimoto, Will Sankey, Scott Sullivan, Kimbal Thompson
- **Members absent (1):** Rich Brunner
- **Office of Planning and Sustainable Development/Coastal Zone Management (OPSD/CZM) staff present (6):** Mary Alice Evans (OPSD), Justine Nihipali, Sarah Chang, Lisa Webster, Kristi Kimura, Yuki Terada
- **Others present (6):** James “Jim” Coon, Malcom Iwami, Chase McDaniel, Nancy McPherson - Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), Claire Rossi de Leon, Susan “Sue” Sakai

DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL

- MACZAC meeting agenda for October 20, 2023
- Draft minutes from July 7, 2023, MACZAC Meeting
- CZM Report to MACZAC (October 20, 2023)

I. Call to Order

MACZAC Chair Phil Fernandez called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Chair Fernandez welcomed former MACZAC members Jim Coon (Maui), Sue Sakai (O’ahu), and a new member, Will Sankey (Lāna’i). Introductions were made.

II. Approval of July 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as circulated.

III. Welcome from OPSD Interim Director, and presentation of Governor’s recognition of former MACZAC members Jim Coon and Sue Sakai

OPSD Interim Director Mary Alice Evans welcomed everyone and presented Governor’s messages to former MACZAC members and long-term volunteers Jim Coon and Sue

Sakai. A special message from Governor Josh Green, M.D. acknowledged and recognized their remarkable contributions to the State and the OPSD. Mr. Coon and Ms. Sakai represented various fields, provided their expertise in guiding the CZM program, and advocated for CZM; both previously served on the Marine and Coastal Zone Management Advisory Group (MACZMAG), the predecessor advisory group of MACZAC, and were charter members of MACZAC. Chair Fernandez and Vice Chair Donna Brown congratulated and greatly appreciated their contributions to MACZAC and the State and extended their best retirement wishes. Mr. Coon and Ms. Sakai conveyed their gratitude.

IV. Hawai'i CZM Program Manager's Report:

Ms. Nihipali provided details about CZM activities, and Chair Fernandez noted to MACZAC members that they can contact MACZAC Coordinator Yuki Terada for inquiries about the contents of the CZM report, and she will connect them with the relevant CZM staff for further information.

National Initiatives

National CZM Program Funding

The CZM Program has accepted its cooperative agreement for FY23-24 in the amount of \$2,705,500.

CZM Habitat Protection and Restoration Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The CZM Program has the privilege of administering IIJA funds that support the goals and intent of the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The FY23-24 federal funding opportunity (FFO) was issued on June 13, 2023. CZM received seven (7) letters of interest (LOI) this year. We submitted three (3) LOIs for consideration and received notice that one (1) was selected to submit a full proposal.

White House Summit on Building Climate Resilient Communities

The CZM Program Manager was invited to participate in this Summit on September 28, 2023. The Summit, announced by President Biden in the summer, brought together local, state, Tribal, and territorial leaders and practitioners focused on climate resilience and was intended to explore opportunities to develop effective climate resilience strategies. Representatives of the White House and Federal Agencies attended the Summit.

Hawaii CZM Program

Ocean Resources Management Plan

Focus Area I: Development & Coastal Hazards

MACZAC member Scott Sullivan expressed his concerns that the State does not have a cohesive approach regarding sea level rise (SLR) and managed retreat, which he believes is the most significant challenge for the next century. He acknowledged his limited understanding of the State's initiatives in those fields but felt a responsibility as a

MACZAC member to remain informed and contribute. Drawing from his experience as a costal engineer, he is familiar with State's ongoing initiatives; however, he emphasized that there seems to be a lack of a unified strategy. He believes that MACZAC should gain a comprehensive understanding of the State's initiatives in this area and contribute their expertise to explore potential ways to assist.

Chair Fernandez agreed with Mr. Sullivan, emphasizing that one of MACZAC's roles is to advocate for the public. While the public receives fragmented information about climate change and SLR, a cohesive plan from the State is crucial, and ongoing communication efforts with the public are deemed essential. Chair Fernandez wanted to ensure that the OPSD director understands the urgency of this and prioritizes this from a public perspective.

Ms. Evans is committed to enhancing communications with the public as plans and policies develop. She noted that the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission will be holding its quarterly meeting on November 9, focusing on mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Chair Fernandez requested future updates for MACZAC.

Ms. Sakai raised concerns about the lack of local information available to residents, citing examples like the uncertainty surrounding a SLR study in Hawai'i Kai, O'ahu, emphasizing the need to convey complex details effectively to the public, and proposing the involvement of a credible expert. MACZAC member Taryn Dizon, being the sole advocate for the Kekaha hotspot in Kaua'i, questioned the State's awareness and efforts in protecting the environment. MACZAC member Kimbal Thomson shared an example from Kāne'ohe, O'ahu, highlighting the communication gap between the State and the public on the shoreline issue. Chair Fenandez agreed with the need for credibility and stressed the importance of engaging a senior-level representative who is recognizable to the public. In response, Ms. Nihipali appreciated the valuable input and acknowledged the significance of these discussions and the need for strategic support in addressing long-term challenges.

Focus Area II: Land-Based Pollution

Chair Fenandez inquired if there are legislators focusing on issues such as land-based pollution for whom MACZAC members might request a resolution. Ms. Nihipali responded that there is a co-working group specifically addressing cesspools, possibly led by Representative Linda Ichiyama and Senator Lorraine Inouye, along with Senator Mike Gabbard. This working group has shown openness to suggestions of mitigation strategies in the agricultural and environmental areas. Chair Fernandez expressed his intention to contact them and share a copy of the MACZAC letter, highlighting the potential for legislative support.

CZM Project Analyst Lisa Webster reported that she had participated in a Department of Health (DOH) workshop addressing a campaign focused on land-based pollution, particularly the conversion of cesspools, to increase awareness of the connection between land-based pollution and ocean health. Funding is crucial for this campaign, and she suggested that supporting a marketing campaign for land-based pollution and coastal hazards could be a valuable starting point.

Focus Area III: Marine Ecosystems

Ms. Dizon emphasized that the coastal zone management efforts need to be extended from the coast, or makai, to the mountains, or mauka, to support healthy estuaries, or muliwai. She stressed the importance of bringing attention to the county's responsibility in maintaining clean streams and rivers, specifically by addressing issues caused by overgrown vegetation that impedes water flow, which is the responsibility of private landowners. Ms. Nihipali noted that there are consistent challenges related to staff shortages, which affect inspections. Chair Fernandez highlighted freshwater concerns related to the complicated jurisdiction and the Commission on Water Resource Management's (CWRM) limited mandate, which covers surface water but not groundwater, and proposed a comprehensive legal review to clarify water management responsibilities.

County CZM

Ms. Dizon shared her reflections on the August CZM staff visit to Kaua'i, emphasizing the significance of examining real issues and hotspots, including shoreline damage and existing projects. She highlighted concerns such as shoreline erosion by King Tides, cesspools, and the impacts of SLR. She also expressed her intention to hold an additional meeting with State and county staff, as well as residents, to gather regional insights on the development of the Kekaha Harbor, highlighting its historical impact on the shoreline and fish populations.

V. Hotspots

- **Maui Wildfire Updates**

Vice Chair Brown, a resident of Lahaina, provided an update on the post-wildfire situation in her community. As cleanup efforts have continued since the August wildfire, the community has mixed feelings regarding the return of tourism, as many residents are still residing in hotels without a permanent home, and facing job loss and a housing shortage. Ongoing monitoring efforts by groups like the University of Hawai'i (UH) and the Maui Nui Resource Council aim to ensure the safety of ocean water, with additional focus on bacterial contamination through soil sampling by UH. The recovery process is progressing slowly and presents persistent challenges for the community. Vice Chair Brown also noted the absence of MACZAC member Rich Brunner, a resident of Lahaina, from this meeting due to being reassigned to work on the Island of Hawai'i after losing his workplace in Lahaina.

MACZAC member Denver Coon, a resident of Lahaina, discussed the significant losses suffered at Lahaina Harbor, where over 80 boats, including one of his commercial vessels, were destroyed by fire and the surviving boats have been displaced. Many of the commercial operators who have relocated to Mā'alaea and Kā'anapali on Maui have faced challenges due to encountering limitations in obtaining commercial permits for those new locations. These challenges impose hardships on long-standing business operators in Lahaina. Collaborative efforts with the State and Federal authorities, including the Coast Guard, are underway to address the cleanup, but access to the area remains restricted. Rebuilding

Lahaina is anticipated to be a generational effort, with an extended recovery period estimated between 8 and 10 years.

Chair Fernandez expressed his condolences to Vice Chair Brown, Mr. Coon, and their families and businesses, appreciating their willingness to share those updates. He provided details about the ongoing long-term recovery efforts on Maui. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State have turned over responsibilities to the Red Cross, focusing on day-to-day assistance. The Red Cross is spending \$400,000 per day to support long-term recovery by providing housing, food, and financial aid. This level of financial assistance has been approved for the next three years. The collaborative strategy involves coordination between the State, county, Federal government, and the Red Cross and aims to prevent homelessness and displacement. Furthermore, the individuals needing to relocate to O'ahu will receive support from the Red Cross until they secure employment. However, there are already a number of Maui residents who have left the State.

- Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Recent Effort on Windward O'ahu Coastal Erosion

Mr. Sullivan noted that he has expertise in sea engineering and is currently working on a DOT's project dealing with shoreline erosion on the highway in Windward O'ahu, from Kualoa Regional Park to Hau'ula, covering approximately 4 to 5 miles with approximately 18,000 feet of critical shoreline erosion currently threatening the highway. The project along Kamehameha Highway poses a significant challenge to the community as it is the only link between those areas. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected to be released early next year to address recommended solutions. The community's primary concern is to keep the highway functioning. They are open to shoreline armoring as a short-term solution despite the cost, but they are eager to learn about the long-term strategy for the area, which has not been determined yet by the DOT. This matter presents greater complexity compared to typical shoreline issues and remains a persistent challenge.

Ms. Webster inquired about the possibility of relocating the threatened highway and infrastructure inland; Mr. Sullivan responded that a short-term move is unfeasible, but a long-term plan has potential. Mr. Sullivan highlighted the comprehensive nature of this issue, requiring collaboration between various state agencies. Chair Fernandez stressed the need for a clear approach to addressing SLR, combining short-term projects with a long-term strategy, as the current focus remains on addressing individual hotspots.

- Kekaha Kikīaola Boat Harbor to the 27th Mile Marker on West Kaua'i
Ms. Dizon presented examples of the impact of SLR on the Kekaha shoreline, such as waves breaking close to the road and sand encroaching on it. The sand cannot be reused due to potential fossil fuel contamination. Moreover, the

seawall is gradually sinking, and the shoreline vegetation has suffered damage. This erosion is a result of the combined effects of SLR, climate change, and limitations in the harbor structure's ability to maintain a healthy flow. Additionally, Ms. Dizon noted an unforeseen consequence of a sand restoration project that ended up covering the reef.

Chair Fernandez emphasized the significance of drawing the attention of policymakers to address these hotspots and advocated for involvement from the DOT and other relevant agencies to address these issues effectively.

VI. Public input on all agenda items

Ms. McPherson (DHHL) reported that they have received a relocation request from the Kapa'akea homestead on Moloka'i. This request is in response to various impacts, including flooding from King Tides and other climate change-related issues. DHHL plans to assess the situation, gather input from residents, and explore options for either staying or relocating, as this is currently a significant concern in Moloka'i. Chair Fernandez emphasized the importance of addressing this issue and suggested including it on the agenda for the next meeting as a hotspot.

VII. New business

1. Vote on Chair Fernandez's transition from West Hawai'i Island to O'ahu representation due to his relocation

Mr. Sullivan made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Thomson and Vice Chair Brown. With no objections, Chair Fernandez's transition from West Hawai'i Island to O'ahu representation was unanimously approved.

2. Nomination, Discussion, and Vote to Fill an Open Seat on the Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) Governing Council with a MACZAC Representative

Chair Fernandez shared some background on PacIOOS is responsible for the development, operation, improvement, and oversight of the regional ocean observing system throughout the Pacific Ocean. PacIOOS has a governing and advisory body, and MACZAC is eligible to nominate a MACZAC member as a representative of the Governing Council.

Vice Chair Brown expressed her interest in the position, citing her prior experience as a member of the PacIOOS Governing Council and her work developing educational programs and utilizing PacIOOS's systems in her oceanography teaching classes. Mr. Sullivan also expressed his interest, citing his background as a coastal engineer and his familiarity with the organization. Ms. Dizon initially expressed her interest but later withdrew her nomination in support of Vice Chair Brown and Mr. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan withdrew himself and nominated Vice Chair Brown due to her extensive experience with PacIOOS. With no objections, Vice Chair Brown was unanimously approved as a MACZAC Representative of the PacIOOS Governing Council.

3. MACZAC member Bob Nishimoto inquired if Chair Fernandez had recommendations

for a new MACZAC representative for West Hawai'i Island. Chair Fenandez responded that he had a few potential candidates in mind and encouraged Dr. Nishimoto to provide any suggestions.

4. Chair Fernandez noted that he will invite Charlie Young, a native Hawaiian cultural practitioner, to discuss the cultural aspects of climate change and SLR at an upcoming MACZAC meeting. (There were timing issues preventing confirmation for this meeting.)

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14 am.