

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

MINUTES

Friday, July 25, 2025: 9:30 am – 11:00 am

Hybrid format: Zoom and in-person at the West Hawai'i Civic Center

Building A, Council Meeting Room
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Highway
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

Link to the electronic video recording of the meeting:

[July 25, 2025 MACZAC Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDANCE

- **Members present (6):** Taryn Dizon, Scott Sullivan, Kimbal Thompson, Denver Coon, Rich Brunner, Sylvia Yanagisako
- **Members absent (3):** Donna Brown, Will Sankey, Robert (Bob) Nishimoto
- **Office of Planning and Sustainable Development/Coastal Zone Management (OPSD/CZM) staff present (8):** Chris Liu, Sarah Chang, Kristi Kimura, Lisa Webster, McKenzie Lim, Ciera McQuaid, Isabelle Tsuchitori, Sebastian Penate
- **Others present (4):** Laura Acasio (County of Hawai'i, Office of Sustainability, Climate Equity, and Resilience), Michelle Ahn (County of Hawai'i Planning Department), Derek Harbaugh (County of Hawai'i Planning Department), Christopher Teague (Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources)

DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL

- MACZAC meeting agenda for July 25, 2025
- Draft minutes from April 9, 2025
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Report to MACZAC (July 25, 2025)

I. Call to Order

Chair Scott Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:34 am and facilitated round-table introductions.

II. Approval of April 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as circulated.

III. Welcome from OPSD-CZM Manager

OPSD-CZM Manager Chris Liu welcomed everyone and thanked the Hawai'i County Planners for hosting site visits for CZM staff and Hawai'i County MACZAC members.

IV. CZM Program Report including funding, focus areas, and project updates

Hawai'i CZM Program

MACZAC Representative Vacancies

There are currently three (3) vacancies on MACZAC, with one opening each for Kaua'i, Moloka'i, and O'ahu. To highlight the vacancies, CZM staff engaged with community partners such as the University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law Environmental Law networks and the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, and prepared materials for CZM social media/web platforms.

Summer Intern Updates

CZM welcomed two interns for the summer of 2025. One intern, Sebastian Penate, is completing an internship through the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' "Hele Imua Internship" program, while the other intern, Isabelle Tsuchitori (Izzy), is from the Bowdoin College Career Exploration and Development program. CZM is grateful for the opportunity to have interns supporting our projects and initiatives.

- Izzy Tsuchitori is working on the initial stages of developing an updated statewide map of wetlands to inform permitting decisions that consider wetland protections. This emerging issue was identified through ORMP stakeholder engagement as part of the ORMP Refresh process and relates to all three focus areas of the ORMP. Izzy's research has been focused on wetland definitions, permitting, and map layers, as well as identifying stakeholders for a potential working group, and Izzy is summarizing her findings in a StoryMap that she is developing. She is also working in ArcGIS Pro to help create layers of bays and stream mouths for the Hawaiian Estuaries Viewer (in development), while also participating in the 2025 ORMP Evaluation & Refresh.
- Sebastian Penate is aiding in the development of the CZM Program's watershed coordination map. This project collects ArcGIS spatial data to map out watershed stewardship activity across the Hawaiian archipelago. Goals include strengthened communication networks between active watershed-stewarding organizations and improving inter-agency coordination. Alongside this project work, Sebastian has regularly engaged in meetings with the CZM team to support the 2025 ORMP Evaluation & Refresh, which has provided an opportunity to learn how the CZM network integrates stakeholder input into natural resource management strategies.

FY23 Project of Special Merit – Integrating CZM and DHHL

CZM Project Analyst Sarah Chang noted that CZM and the project team concluded interviews with DHHL staff to understand how and when they most frequently interact with SMA in their work. These interviews informed an assessment report of current DHHL practices as related to reviewing activity in the shoreline area. A draft assessment was submitted to CZM for review. The project team is conducting site visits to hot spot areas on each island. The team visited Hawaiian Homelands in Nanakuli on July 14, 2025. The next site visit will be to Anahola on August 5-6, 2025. Anticipated project end date is March 31, 2026.

Link to full CZM Report to MACZAC: [July 25, 2025 CZM Report to MACZAC](#)

V. Report out and recommendations from MACZAC Public Engagement (PE) Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) (non-action item)

Scott Sullivan, MACZAC Chair, provided the following report out and recommendations from the MACZAC PE PIG:

PE PIG - Purpose and Objectives

The science and projections for future Sea Level Rise (SLR) show that SLR is an increasing threat to Hawai'i's coastal zone. While the State and county governments are actively formulating actions and strategies for adapting to SLR, it is unclear how knowledgeable the general public is to the SLR threat and governmental actions being developed to adapt to the threat. As MACZAC is an advocate for the public on CZM issues, the PE PIG was initiated to explore the following topics:

- Improve MACZAC members' knowledge of government SLR adaptation strategies.
- Develop means to increase general public awareness and knowledge of these SLR strategies.
- Determine how wide or narrow the scope of public engagement should be.
- Determine what priority topics the public should be informed of.
- Consider approaches to informing and engaging the public in SLR adaption.

Summary of PE PIG Activities

1. The PE PIG was established in February 2024 and concluded the initial phase in March 2025.
2. Virtual meetings were held approximately monthly to discuss and refine the purpose, objectives, and possible public engagement methodologies.
3. At a regular quarterly MACZAC meeting Dr. Ketty Loeb, University of Hawai'i, Institute for Sustainability and Resilience (ISR), presented a summary of the results of surveys of State and county elected officials and civil servants regarding their understanding and knowledge of SLR and the risks it poses. As this is considered of direct value to the general purposes of the PE PIG, Scott Sullivan and Sylvia Yanagisako, both PE PIG members, met with the principal survey authors Drs. Ketty Loeb and Colin Moore to discuss their findings in more detail. During this discussion Drs. Loeb and Moore said that they had applied for a grant to conduct a similar Statewide survey of the general public. After resolution of funding sources this public survey is being initiated now, July 2025, with results expected in late fall 2025.
4. Given that the survey of the general public's understanding and knowledge of SLR, and government adaptation investigations, is directly pertinent to the purpose and objectives of the PE PIG, it was decided to close out the current PE PIG with the intent of reformulating it when the public survey results become available and can be reviewed to aid in better quantifying the PE PIG objectives.

General PE PIG Recommendations

- OPSD work with UH to get the public survey completed.
- MACZAC create another PE PIG once ISR completes the public survey to follow up on survey results and review ISR data.
- OPSD develop outreach materials with summary of government activities.
- OPSD add recurring section to newsletter: SLR Adaptation Column
- OPSD/counties partner to engage with public through existing, trusted organizations

VI. Presentation: County of Hawai'i Office of Sustainability, Climate Equity and Resilience (OSCER) - Overview, Collaborations, and Ongoing Initiatives (non-action item)

Laura Acasio, Administrator, County of Hawai'i, Office of Sustainability, Climate Equity, and Resilience

Ms. Acasio, who took office in February 2025, shared that OSCER's mission is to deepen community connections, strengthen cross-departmental relationships, gather and share relevant knowledge and data, acquire funding and resources for project implementation, and embed principles of sustainability, climate equity, and resilience into county operations. Functions of OSCER include program development, grant writing and grant management, project management, data collection, communications and outreach, public education and awareness, coordination and collaboration.

The OSCER office was established by Hawai'i County Council in 2023, with the first staff hired in late 2024. Prior to establishment of this office, there were earlier efforts at the County to address sustainable energy and water use, including with the County Green Team, which was active from 2008-2012. The County declared a climate emergency in 2019, committed to adhere to the State's Clean Energy Goals and to uphold the Paris Climate Agreement and the Aloha+ Challenge. In 2023, the County developed the Integrated Climate Action Plan, with 290 actions, to serve as a roadmap for implementing climate action in municipal operations. Initial priorities of the OSCER office include supporting preservation of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources, increasing climate resilience, empowering communities, supporting local businesses and food production, transitioning to renewable energy and transportation, and reducing waste. Current projects include the Facilities Conditions Assessment and Energy Management Plan, the County Reduced Waste Pilot Program, community training opportunities for participatory storytelling, a heat safety campaign, and general grant support.

Ms. Acasio also shared that the OSCER office applied for a NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grant to implement erosion control and green infrastructure improvements to Puapua'a Iki, an 11.5-acre parcel along Ali'i Drive in West Hawai'i which houses Kauakaiaakaola Heiau as well as ancient ruins and burial sites.

Next steps for the OSCER office are to integrate climate change risk into County planning and decision-making, to establish a County climate database, and to maintain robust stakeholder engagement.

MACZAC member Kimbal Thompson asked Ms. Acasio to share how OSCER staff engage with communities to assess current issues and preferred community solutions. Ms. Acasio stated that Mayor Kimo Alameda has held seventeen (17) community town halls since taking office in December 2024, which were attended by Ms. Acasio along with all of the administrative cabinet members, and that these meetings were helpful in better understanding the issues being faced in each community. OSCER staff also participate in community workdays, working with local organizations involved in community projects, developing connections between community members and organizations doing related work. OSCER staff also regularly attend community events, setting up informational tables to provide an opportunity for community engagement.

Chair Sullivan asked Ms. Acasio how the OSCER office is addressing public engagement regarding SLR adaptation, and Ms. Acasio stated that this topic is being addressed by the County Planning Department. Michelle Ahn, Deputy Director of the County Planning Department, added that Hawai'i has unique shoreline types, and that a recent project focused on surveying the coast to quantify the various shoreline types found around the island to determine appropriate shoreline setbacks. Ms. Acasio then added that there has been some conversation around SLR adaptation along Banyan Drive, which is located along Hilo's Waiakea Peninsula, with various alternatives explored.

Dr. Sylvia Yanagisako, MACZAC member, asked what is being done about cesspools. Ms. Acasio responded that the Mayor's office recently formed the Cesspool Conversion Task Force, identified stakeholders, hired consultants, and started identifying projects to address this issue.

Dr. Yanagisako then asked what is being done about the goat population on Hawai'i Island, and Ms. Acasio shared that her office has been in touch with the Game Management Commission and others and is trying to find a way to mitigate negative impacts as the State develops an ungulate management plan. Ms. Acasio added that goats are a resource, and a source of food, but that there are challenges around how wild game can be used. Mr. Christopher Teague, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), noted the Kohala Moku on Hawai'i Island was selected as one of the five Moku for SeaGrant's Pili Na Moku Grant. Project partners on Hawai'i Island including DOFAW, DHHL, DAR, and community groups will work together to focus on sediment reduction through restoration efforts to include fencing, ungulate removal, fire breaks, and other efforts within the project area.

VII. Hotspots

Lahaina Harbor

Denver Coon, MACZAC member, shared that the Department of Land and Natural Resources-Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DLNR-DOBOR) is hoping to restore limited commercial operations, and possibly ferry service, by the end of the year. There is currently limited recreational access for surfing and fishing. There is ongoing work being done on other supportive infrastructure in the area.

Ala Wai Canal

Kimbal Thompson, MACZAC member, shared that there were several designs proposed for a bridge to span the Ala Wai, but that there has been some community opposition from residents on the mauka side of the canal to moving forward on this project.

Mr. Thompson also noted that there have been recent efforts to use Genki balls to improve water quality in the canal, but that there has been no obvious improvement in water quality from this effort. Mr. Thompson, who regularly paddles in the canal, added that a native groundcover, 'Ākulikuli, was planted in the 1970s and that this led to a noticeable improvement in water quality, and it is unclear why this mitigation effort was discontinued.

Mr. Thompson also noted that Hawai'i Green Growth has proposed a bill to have the Honolulu City Council establish the Ala Wai Watershed Special Improvement District to invest in nature-based solutions to mitigate flooding, but that the status of this project is unclear.

VIII. Public input on all agenda items (non-action item)

There was no public input provided.

IX. New Business

The next MACZAC meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2025. Time and location are to be determined.

Ms. Taryn Dizon, MACZAC member, shared that she was interested in attending the HCPO Conference, and asked about the possibility of reimbursement for conference registration fees. Ms. Lisa Webster, MACZAC Coordinator, stated that CZM staff would send an email to MACZAC members with more information.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 am