

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

## MINUTES

Friday, February 6, 2026: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Hybrid Format: Zoom and In-Person at Office of Planning and Sustainable Development  
(OPSD) Conference Room State Office Tower, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

235 S. Beretania St.

Honolulu, HI 96813

### Link to electronic video recording of the meeting:

[February 6, 2026 MACZAC Meeting Recording](#)

## ATTENDANCE

- **Members present (9):** Scott Sullivan, Sylvia Yanagisako, Robert (Bob) Nishimoto, Denver Coon, Rich Brunner, Will Sankey, Donna Brown, Kimbal Thompson, Jim Nicolow
- **Member(s) absent (1):** Taryn Dizon
- **Office of Planning and Sustainable Development/Coastal Zone Management (OPSD/CZM) staff present (9):** Chris Liu, Sarah Chang, Lisa Webster, McKenzie Lim, Ciera McQuaid, Sebastian Penate, Laura Morrison, Shichao Li, Rebecca Anderson
- **Others present (10):** Ketty Loeb (UH-ISR), Zena Grennci (UH-ISR/ASU, Pacific RISA), Hoaka Thomas (DLNR-DAR), Nancy McPherson (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands), Taylor-Kaili McKenzie (O‘ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council)

## DISTRIBUTED MATERIAL

- MACZAC meeting agenda for February 6, 2026
- Draft minutes from November 6, 2025
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Report to MACZAC (February 6, 2026)

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Scott Sullivan called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM and facilitated round-table introductions of MACZAC members.

### **II. Approval of November 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were approved as circulated.

### **III. Welcome from OPSD Director**

OPSD Director Mary Alice Evans welcomed everyone.

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

##### **National Initiatives**

##### **IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – Capacity Building for Habitat Protection and Restoration**

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law competitive funding was awarded to island of Hawai'i to Puapua'a Iki Habitat Restoration Project. Application went through CZM and NOAA, led by county of Hawai'i Office of Sustainability. CZM contact staff is Kristi Kimura.

##### **Hawai'i CZM Program**

##### **MACZAC Representative Vacancies**

- There are currently still two (2) vacancies on MACZAC. There has been no update on filling the vacancies on MACZAC for Kaua'i and Moloka'i.

Jim Nicolow has filled one O'ahu vacancy. Welcome Jim!

- Representative from East Hawai'i and one from O'ahu have agreed to stay on MACZAC until new members are recruited for their seats.

##### **CZM Staffing**

Chris Liu announced two CZM vacant positions have been filled.

##### **2020 Ocean Resources Management Plan Implementation**

##### **2025 ORMP Evaluation and Refresh**

Ms. Lim introduced the 2025 ORMP Evaluation & Refresh, a progress report to mark the midpoint of the ten-year implementation plan. Noted that the report and StoryMap for the implementation plan is on the CZM website.

##### **Regional Shoreline Management**

Introduced by Ms. McQuaid, the Pili Nā Moku Pilot Project has selected its project team, and procurement of contracts with the Statewide Facilitator and Regional Facilitators for the Wai'anae and Mā'alaea moku for Phase 1 are nearing completion. The project team will design mapping workshops for community members and stakeholders to share their coastal uses, as well as their experiences and knowledge of shoreline changes. CZM is also in discussions with organizations in Moloka'i for Phase 2 of the project within the Kona moku. Project funding goes through 2029.

##### **Watershed Coordination Map**

CZM is developing a GIS map of organizations and agencies across the islands that work on watershed-related/based restoration activities. The map intends to support coordination between agencies and local non-profit organizations and increase awareness about active projects and work being done in the watershed. Staff contact is Ciera McQuaid.

##### **Community-Based Monitoring Program**

Kōkua Community-Based Monitoring Program completed their contract with the CZM Program at the end of December 2025. Hoaka Thomas is set to present later in the meeting.

## Hawaiian Estuaries Viewer

CZM is collaborating with DAR to develop a statewide Hawaiian Estuaries Viewer. Data consists of aerial imagery of stream mouths and bays to create a public map viewer to include stakeholders and public opinion. CZM and DAR staff meet regularly to complete the development of data layers. A new contract to work with Esri staff was finalized October 2025 with Viewer development completed by December 2025. Estimated to publicly release the Viewer in March 2026. Staff contact is Lisa Webster.

Link to full CZM report to MACZAC: [February 6, 2026 CZM Report to MACZAC\](#)

### **V. Report on Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) Conference**

*Donna Brown, Maui MACZAC Representative*

Ms. Brown began the introduction by explaining that the funding comes from NOAA, under the Department of Commerce which prioritizes shipping and the weather service. The shift now prioritizes the facilitation of commerce, enhancing integration of system sharing with the public, and furthering data from the wave buoys with data overlaid from waves and tides to get advances on coastal flooding forecasts, including all around Pacific islands under US territory. As NOAA works on their five (5) year timeline, Ms. Brown was tasked with receiving group input for NOAA's curiosity towards being more useful for CZM. Mr. Sullivan said the information available to the public is invaluable and he wants to further discuss finding ways to support them in return.

### **VI. Presentation: Perceptions of Risk Among Hawai'i's Public: Sea Level Rise Survey Results**

*Zena Grecni & Ketty Loeb, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Hawai'i Institute for Sustainability and Resilience*

Mr. Sullivan introduced Dr. Ketty Loeb and Zena Grecni to present the results from their recent public survey on perceptions of sea level rise risk. Dr. Loeb thanked Mr. Sullivan and acknowledged Arizona State University (ASU) for funding the public input survey. The survey was conducted through Anthology Research using both online and phone surveys of Hawai'i residents. The findings highlighted the importance of public outreach on coastal erosion and recommended expanding educational media on sea level rise. The results also suggest that lawmakers may need to take a more proactive role in addressing sea level rise.

Dr. Loeb presented survey findings related to the types of media the public has been exposed to and how information about sea level rise is being communicated. Coastal erosion was identified as a term that has become increasingly familiar to the public, highlighting an opportunity to expand public understanding of sea level rise and the factors contributing to coastal changes.

Dr. Loeb then transitioned the presentation to Ms. Zena Grecni, who presented results related to risk perception from the statewide survey. Ms. Grecni shared findings on whether Hawai'i residents feel impacted by sea level rise and whether they believe it will affect them in the near

future. Participants were also asked to identify the types of impacts they believe would affect them most. Among the options provided, coastal erosion was identified as the most likely impact.

Dr. Loeb then presented findings related to policy preferences from the survey. Most residents expressed support for immediate action by lawmakers to address sea level rise. The results also indicated some division among respondents regarding residential coastal property ownership and concerns about private property protections. However, there was strong support for restrictions on development in coastal and flood-prone areas, as well as support for government funding to acquire coastal lands for restoration and the maintenance of natural areas that can function as buffers against sea level rise.

Survey results also indicated that many residents would be willing to relocate if provided fair compensation. A large majority of respondents expressed support for increased investment in public education to expand awareness and understanding of sea level rise impacts.

Ms. Grecni concluded the presentation with a summary of statewide beliefs and perceptions across counties. The survey findings were organized into three categories: knowledge and beliefs, risk perceptions, and policy preferences. Overall, the results indicate strong public support for increased investment in education related to sea level rise. Next steps include publishing the full survey report by February 16, as well as conducting additional surveys with Hawai'i's elected officials and civil servants.

Nancy McPherson from DHHL expressed interest in receiving an update on the survey results and discussing the findings further with Dr. Loeb and Ms. Grecni. At the conclusion of the presentation, Dr. Loeb suggested sharing the survey results with additional organizations that may benefit from the information. Scott Sullivan and Sylvia Yanagisako proposed conducting interviews and focus groups in collaboration with MACZAC to supplement the survey results and capture perspectives from a broader range of community members.

Dr. Loeb noted that counties appear to recognize the challenges associated with sea level rise and coastal issues; however, the surveys suggest that these topics have not been treated as a high priority by government decision-makers. Survey responses also indicated that community members are generally unwilling to pay additional fees to support educational outreach, while also showing reluctance to reallocate existing funds toward recommended solutions. Surveys of elected officials similarly showed that these issues were not ranked among their top priorities.

Mr. Sullivan recommended that MACZAC members increase their involvement in public education and outreach efforts, in response to the survey findings.

**VII. Presentation: Kokua Community Based Management Project Phase II Results**  
*Hoaka Thomas, Department of Land and Natural Resources-Division of Aquatic Resources (DLNR-DAR)*

Mr. Sullivan introduced Hoaka Thomas, who is working in association with DLNR-DAR, to

present on the implementation and evaluation of a community-based management (CBM) framework. The framework was developed to strengthen relationships and communication between communities and agencies while allowing flexibility in how management approaches are implemented across different communities.

The project is focused in southwest O‘ahu and is partnered with Kuleana Coral Restoration. During Phase I, the community identified limu monitoring as a priority. This phase included training community members in survey methods and expanding local knowledge of nearshore resources. Phase II focused on implementation and evaluation to ensure the project remained flexible and effective.

Mr. Thomas highlighted several successes from the implementation phase, including continued community monitoring beyond the initial limu training, a sustained focus on identifying local issues through monitoring efforts, strengthened local capacity for ongoing observations, improved management of community-collected data, and increased trust and understanding between community members and agency partners.

Challenges discussed during the presentation included variation in the level of training and experience among community participants, uncertainty around data sufficiency, difficulties translating stewardship efforts into management actions, local logistical constraints, and limited access to monitoring tools and equipment.

Mr. Thomas also discussed efforts to integrate the smaller CBM framework into a broader management framework. This work includes developing a draft structure to refine existing procedures and identify opportunities for collaborative monitoring that can help inform management decisions. Several key takeaways from the evaluation process included the importance of maintaining an appropriate pace for the process, evaluating how the framework is co-developed with communities, ensuring clear and consistent communication to improve public accessibility, prioritizing relationship-building as a central objective rather than a secondary outcome, and emphasizing place-based, face-to-face engagement with communities.

MACZAC member Bob Nishimoto noted that the presentation focused primarily on shoreline habitats and resources and asked whether mauka processes were also being considered given their potential effects on nearshore environments. Mr. Thomas explained that while agencies relevant to mauka-makai processes have been introduced to the community, the current project focus remains on intertidal and subsistence resources as prioritized within the CBM framework.

Mr. Nishimoto expressed concern that excluding mauka processes could introduce bias when evaluating nearshore conditions. Mr. Thomas noted that collaboration with Kuleana Coral Restoration helps address some of these gaps, though agency jurisdiction and partnership agreements can limit the geographic scope of the project. Mr. Nishimoto asked whether MACZAC or its members could help support expansion of the project’s focus.

Mr. Thomas noted that capacity constraints remain a challenge; however, funding from the Pili

Nā Moku grant on Hawai‘i Island has been reserved to support the hiring of additional community-based management coordinators.

### **VIII. Discussion on MACZAC priorities**

Mr. Sullivan introduced potential priority areas for MACZAC. He noted the importance of identifying quantifiable ways for MACZAC to assist the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) in strengthening public outreach and engagement.

Ciera McQuaid and McKenzie Lim discussed the Green Fee Letter of Support. They selected 11 proposed projects from the Green Fee Council to include in the letter submitted to the legislature. Ms. McQuaid also introduced additional priorities, including improving collaboration and engagement with partners and members who have relevant expertise or interests through the development of MACZAC projects. Another priority discussed was increasing public engagement and education, particularly around sea level rise, including efforts to translate technical information into formats that are more accessible to the public.

CZM Manager Chris Liu also raised the idea of establishing an annual MACZAC intern position.

### **IX. Vote on letter of support for selected green fee projects to be presented to the Legislature (action item)**

McKenzie Lim described and explained that at the previous meeting MACZAC members voted on project subcategories and categorized eleven projects to fit within those selected categories. The first five projects fall under community stewardship programs, nearshore and coastal environments, ahupua‘a restoration, fishpond restoration, and related efforts. The remaining projects fall under categories including watershed management (State), cesspool conversions, watershed coordination, and restoration to support reef resilience. All projects are to be funded through different State agencies.

Chris Liu noted that organizing the projects in this way helps prioritize projects that provide collective benefits for the state and the agencies responsible for managing them. Donna Brown raised a concern regarding the language “hybrid protections,” which prompted discussion about ensuring that projects prioritize benefits to local communities and the environment.

MACZAC Chair Scott Sullivan then called for a motion to approve the Green Fee letter with the deletion of item eleven. The motion was approved by all members present. Ms. Lim confirmed that the letter will be finalized, signed by Mr. Sullivan, and submitted.

### **X. Hotspots**

- a. Na Muliwai – East Hawai‘i

Bob Nishimoto suggested moving the hot spot update and presentation to the next MACZAC meeting due to timing constraints.

### **XI. Public input on all agenda items throughout the meeting**

*(Public input was provided throughout the meeting.)*

No public input was received.

Mr. Sullivan suggested exploring new ways to increase public and community engagement. A question was raised about holding MACZAC meetings on different islands and improving advertising of meetings to encourage greater public participation. Chris Liu explained that public notices are issued in advance of meetings. Ciera McQuaid added that members of the public or community groups can access meeting information and materials through the MACZAC website if needed.

## **XII. New Business**

The next quarterly MACZAC meeting is anticipated to be held on Friday, May 22, 2026, time and location to be decided.

Mr. Sullivan also requested that additional time be allocated at the next meeting to further discuss agenda item number three and establish priorities for MACZAC members.

Sebastian Penate introduced the idea of expanding outreach to universities and schools to strengthen public education efforts. Ms. Lim noted that attempts have been made to engage University of Hawai'i students with MACZAC, but there has been limited response.

## **XIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 PM.