

## **Restarting the Economic Engine: Addressing the Challenges of Disaster Recovery in Coastal Communities**

*Tuesday, August 21st, 2012*

*Governor Rex Lee Auditorium, American Samoa*

The UN's International Strategy for Risk Reduction Global Assessment Report (2009) estimates that over the past three decades (1975-2008), more than 2.2 million people globally have lost their lives in natural hazard-induced disasters (excluding epidemics), with associated economic losses amounting to USD 1,527.6 billion (ISDR/Global Assessment Report, 2009). These types of events undermine public health, livelihoods and economies and the number of disasters linked to natural hazards continues to rise, exacting a significant toll on coastal communities. Observations made after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami show how neighboring coasts were differentially affected, depending in part on the presence or absence of well-preserved coral reefs, mangroves, and coastal vegetation. It is abundantly clear that healthy coastal ecosystems are part of the foundation of sustainable and productive coastal communities. In many US jurisdictions, coral reefs are the pillars of coastal ecosystems and provide valuable services to coastal communities including food security, income, recreation, tourism and protection from hazards. As such, preserving these and, more importantly, protecting and restoring these services quickly after disruptive events is critically important to ensuring long-term social and economic recovery. Yet recent events have highlighted several challenges coastal communities face in supporting the restoration of ecosystem services and long-term recovery of natural resources in general and coral reefs in particular. The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to facilitate dialog regarding the challenges coastal communities face in managing natural resources prior to and after disaster events and begin to explore alternatives that may begin to address them.

### **8:30 – 9:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Moderator: Dr. Michael Hamnett, All Islands Coral Reef Committee Advisor

- Welcome Address Fanuatele Dr Toafa Vaeagae, Director, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, Government of American Samoa
- Eileen Sobeck, US CRTF Co-Chair, Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
- Eric Schwaab, USCRTF Co-Chair, NOAA Acting Assistant Secretary for Conservation and Management
- Adam Stein, Pacific Risk Management O'hano (PRiMO) Executive Director, NOAA Coastal Services Center

**Agenda Review and Workshop Outcomes** – Dr. Michael Hamnett, All Islands Coral Reef Committee Advisor

### **9:00 – 9:30 Panel of Jurisdiction Case Studies (5-7 minutes each)**

Moderator: Gene Brighthouse, Superintendent, Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary, NOAA/ONMS

- American Samoa 2009 Tsunami – Evelyn Vaitautolo-Langford, Governor's Appointed Representative for 2009 Tsunami in American Samoa and Director of Human Resources, American Samoa Government
- M/V Jireh Grounding & Caribbean Bleaching Event – Demaris Delgado, Puerto Rico DNER Director Bureau of Coasts, Reserves and Refuges

- Hawaii Pflueger Clean Water Act Enforcement – Wendy Wiltse, EPA Pacific Islands Conservation Officer

**9:30 – 10:30 Facilitated Federal & Jurisdiction Panel Discussion**

Moderator: Adam Stein, NOAA PSC

- FEMA (invited)
- NOAA – Gerry Davis, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office
- USACE – Cindy Barger, Civil and Public Works
- EPA – Wendy Wiltse, Environmental Scientist, Enforcement Officer EPA Region 9
- EPA – John McCarroll, Manager Pacific Islands Office
- DOI-FWS – Dan Polhemus, Coastal Conservation Program Manager, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office
- USCG – Steve Tucker, Deputy Chief, Marine Protected Species
- American Samoa – Evelyn Vaitautolo-Langford, GAR for 2009 Tsunami
- Puerto Rico – Demaris Delgado, DNER Director Bureau of Coasts, Reserves and Refuges

**10:30 – 10:45 BREAK**

**10:45 – 11:20 Discussion**

Moderator: Dr. Michael Hamnett, All Islands Coral Reef Committee Advisor

- Challenges and Roadblocks
- Opportunities and Next Steps, and
- Recommendations for USCRTF and PRiMO

**11:20 – 11:30 - Summary of Session & Closing**

Summary of Session (Dr. Hamnett) & Closing (Fanuatele Dr. Toafa Vaeagae)