

Bahamas – Hawai'i Makai Watch Learning Exchange
April 23-27, 2015
Oahu and Maui, Hawai'i



Managers and practitioners from the Bahamas and representatives from Hawai'i state agency and non-profits, participate in the Makai Watch Learning Exchange. Photo © Emma Doyle.

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Executive Summary

With the support of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute, four participants from The Bahamas National Trust and the Abaco Association for Flying Fishing Guides visited Hawai'i to learn about community-based management initiatives across the state, with emphasis on the State of Hawai'i's Makai Watch Program – an innovative program engaging communities in the management of their nearshore marine resources by building voluntary compliance through outreach and the reporting of violations to state authorities. Participants took part in a series of meetings with the coordinators and volunteers for the Makai Watch program, as well as with other programs in support of marine conservation in Hawai'i implemented in collaboration with the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, NGOs, and community-based organizations.

Background

The Reef Resilience Network works to strengthen and enhance training and capacity building opportunities for coral reef managers to address the impacts of climate change and local stressors to coral reefs. To do so, Reef Resilience staff organizes multiple learning exchanges each year to provide intensive in-person trainings for coral reef managers to address their site-specific needs. These workshops are designed to teach managers new skills and provide them with opportunities to apply these skills. They are also designed to create an environment of exchange where participants can share resources and lessons learned, provide each other with feedback, and expand their network of coral reef managers, practitioners, and experts.

Following an introduction to Makai Watch at the second peer-to-peer workshop “Building Compliance and Enhancing Enforcement for Caribbean MPAs” organized by GCFI and sponsored by NOAA CRCP in 2012, The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) was among the most motivated of MPA managers to build community involvement in MPA enforcement. Potential for this was also flagged in the Caribbean MPA Management Capacity Assessment. The Bahamas is unique in the Caribbean in having legislation that confers powers of enforcement on volunteers appointed by BNT, and the organization is currently exploring approaches to co-management of protected areas. The need now is to determine the most feasible level of community involvement in MPA enforcement in The Bahamas and to agree on how BNT's existing wardens will work with volunteers from the community. Input is needed on how to train community members, on the needs for ongoing coordination of community enforcement efforts by BNT, and on how to evaluate performance of the program. The cost of the exchange was split between TNC and GCFI with each organization sponsoring two participants.

Objectives

The aim of the workshop was to provide the opportunity for Bahamian participants to:

1. Learn about community-driven education and compliance programs taking place on-the-ground in Hawai'i (how Makai Watch operates in Hawai'i and the challenges, successes and lessons learned in engaging, mobilizing and training communities in the Makai Watch program in Hawai'i);

2. Understand the policies and procedures used to manage the Makai Watch program, including the staff capacity required of the MPA authority in order to support the program;
3. Identify aspects of these programs that can apply to marine resource management in the Bahamas;
4. Outline plans for a pilot project to implement this model of involving community members in MPA management, including enforcement, in the Bahamas; and
5. Feel inspired to lead and organize their communities in order to effectively implement co-management in The Bahamas.

Another important objective of this learning exchange was to share MPA management experience from the Pacific region with the Caribbean region.

Participants

Two staff members of The Bahamas National Trust and two volunteer members of the Abaco Fly fishing Guides Association participated in the Makai Watch Workshop.

Facilitators

Learning exchange presenters included:

- Kristen Maize, Reef Resilience Strategic Communications Manager
- Emma Doyle, Project Manager, Marine Protected Areas Support, Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
- Jason Redulla, Acting DOCARE Administrator
- Luna Kekoa, Hawai'i Makai Watch Coordinator
- Emma Anders, DAR Hawaii Coral Program Coordinator and USCRF POC
- Anne Rosinski, NOAA CRCP Fellow
- Erin Zanre, Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area Coordinator
- Liz Foote, West Maui Kumuwai
- Darla White, Marine Scientist, State of Hawai'i DAR
- Ekolu Lindsey, Polanui Hiu
- Tova Callendar, West Maui Watershed Partnership Coordinator

Agenda Overview

Day one kicked off with an orientation to the Hawai'i Islands and marine resource management in the state at the Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) office in Honolulu, Oahu. Participants were welcomed by Hawai'i's Division of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) leadership and introduced to DOCARE and Division of Aquatic Resource (DAR) Programs that work with communities. Mike Lamier, NOAA, introduced participants to PIMPAC, and Eric Co, marine programs manager for the Castle Foundation, spoke from the perspective of a private foundation seeking to strategically fund marine management initiatives across the state. Kristen

Maize, TNC, provided an introduction to TNC's work with communities in Hawai'i and the Reef Resilience Program. Following lunch, participants visited Hanauma Bay Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD). Accompanied by key staff from DAR, they met with Sea Grant Extension and Hanauma Bay staff to learn about an advanced education and outreach program and understand the co-management of tourism and sustainable financing of Hanauma Bay.

Day two participants flew to Maui and were briefed on the geographical area, Ka'anapali Makai Watch history, and key lessons learned about organizing community groups from Maui Makai Watch coordinators. They also met with Community Fisheries Enforcement Unit representatives and learned about education and compliance in the area, and the challenges these officers face. They also heard their perspectives on design and functioning of the program, so they could consider how it relates to marine management in the Bahamas.

The next day, the Bahamians joined the Ka'anapali Makai Watch training to gain real world experience as participant in a training session with volunteers. DAR staff hosted this training. Day four, Sunday, the Bahamas team reflected on lessons learned from the exchange and drafted action steps for the BNT. The next day, and final day of the learning exchange, they presented a summary of their proposed action steps for community involvement in MPA enforcement in The Bahamas to various agency and non-profit staff involved with co-managed programs in Maui. Following the presentation by BNT staff, the Hawaii representatives in attendance, including RR staff, provided feedback on the proposed action steps during an informal discussion.

Feedback from Participants

"On this visit we saw first-hand how other conservation managers address similar issues," said Mr. David Knowles, Director of Parks for The Bahamas National Trust. "Sharing in the lessons learned by the Pacific region is invaluable as we step up to the challenges of protected areas management in The Bahamas."

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Pre-workshop

While there are benefits to co-coordinating a learning exchange with another capacity-building network (GCFI) – such as sharing resources and expanding the reach of both programs – developing and implementing a workshop agenda collaboratively is a time consuming process. While this worked out for this learning exchange, the staff time required should not be underestimated when co-planning learning exchanges even for the organization playing a supporting role in the exchange.

Post-workshop

The RR program has had limited contact with the participants and they have primarily coordinated with GCFI as they were the lead organization on the exchange. In order to better track and support the outcomes of exchanges when partnering on future exchanges we will clarify a process for follow up and better define roles with partners during the planning process

of the event. We will also encourage partner organizations to collaborate with the RR Network on the development of post workshop resources such as webinars, ask the expert forums and case studies to support the implementation of participants' projects and share lessons with other managers throughout the Network.