

ADDENDUM TO THE MARCH 2024 PACIFIC REMOTE ISLANDS MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT (PRIMNM) RENAMING AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION ASSESSMENT REPORT



Credit: Daniel Lin; Courtesy: NOAA Fisheries

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Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this addendum is to summarize the engagement events hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (the National Center), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)¹ following the release of the [March 2024 Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument \(PRIMNM\) Renaming and Cultural Recognition Assessment Report](#). Engagements were planned to ensure:

- A high degree of inter- and intra-agency coordination.
- The highest practical degree of collaboration with interested individuals and groups including Indigenous cultural practitioners, voyagers, and other “representatives from Indigenous Peoples with ancestral, historical, and cultural connections to the area²” to determine a new name for the Monument and places within.
- Robust dialog amongst the parties mentioned above including individuals who participated in this assessment to the degree possible.
- Transparency and clarification around how a new name could be determined, including the process laid out in the [Presidential Memorandum](#).³

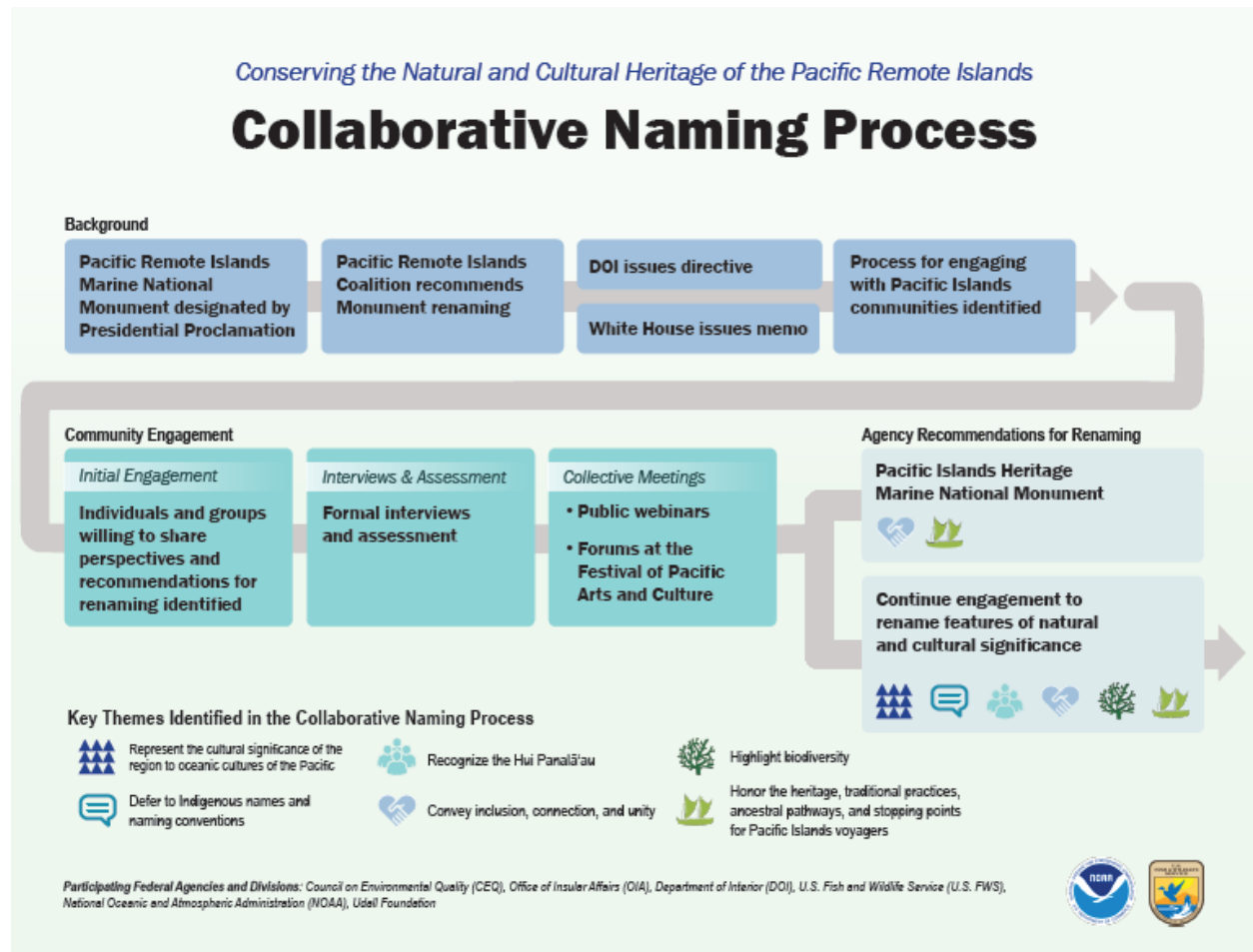
Engagement events included a series of webinars and multiple dialogue sessions and opportunities hosted at the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) held in June of 2024 in Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

Below is a graphic that describes the collaborative naming process of the PRIMNM.

¹ Led by the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with support from the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS).

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/03/24/memorandum-on-conserving-the-natural-and-cultural-heritage-of-the-pacific-remote-islands/>

³ “Within 2 years of the date of this memorandum and through the process they develop, the Secretaries shall identify appropriate names for the National Wildlife Refuges within the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument and any National Marine Sanctuary that is designated in the area, provide a recommendation to the President on the potential renaming of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and identify appropriate naming conventions and processes for naming natural features within the boundaries of the Monument and any National Marine Sanctuary that is designated in the area.”



Webinars

After the report was released, the National Center, NOAA, and USFWS hosted four webinars to share the results of the [PRIMNM \(or Monument\)](#) Renaming and Cultural Recognition Assessment with Federal agency staff (including NOAA staff, the US Air Force, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality), members of the [PRIMNM Community Group](#), assessment interview participants, and the general public. Webinars were held in April and May of 2024 and a total of 89 individuals attended.

The recorded presentations can be viewed on [U.S. Fish and Wildlife's website](#). Webinar attendees asked several questions which were clarified by the agencies including:

- What was the ratio of Hawaiians to Micronesians to others included in interviews and was it noted which groups said what?
 - Agencies responded that this type of information was intentionally not tracked since this was a qualitative assessment. Many interviewees did identify their connections to different Indigenous groups, and Appendix B in the assessment report lists interviewee names and affiliations, if permitted by the individual or group.
- How was this report commissioned, and what is the relationship with agencies?

- The author is the National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution, part of a Federal agency called the Udall Foundation, and this report was commissioned on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA.
- Wake Island and Wake Atoll are different places – if the name changes for one, will all change?
 - Agencies responded that they only have jurisdiction over the Wake Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. Any additional renaming features will be determined at a later date.
- What does it mean to the agencies for this process to be inclusive?
 - Agencies responded that inclusion of as many interested parties as possible during the time allotted is the goal. If no acceptable name is found, the Monument will not be renamed at this time.

During the question-and-answer session following the agency presentation, webinar attendees also provided input concerning the assessment report, the proposed national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Remote Islands, recognition of the Hui Panalā'au, name recommendations, and recommendations regarding this renaming process and future renaming processes. Much of the input received was in line with the input included in the assessment report; novel points included:

- Separate the Sanctuary designation process from the renaming process to provide clarity.
- Don't forget the contributions of the Defenders of Wake (from Guam), in addition to recognizing the Hui Panalā'au.
- Consider the military history and current presence in the Monument space.
- Consider naming the Monument after Mau Piailug.⁴
- Consider naming the Monument after an endemic species, such as a shark.
- Papahānaumokuākea didn't exist as a word prior to its naming, so a completely new name or word for the Monument may be acceptable.
- Consider using multiple names in multiple languages.
- Ensure robust outreach to FestPAC attendees to ensure folks know they can participate in dialogue there.
- Silence doesn't mean Indigenous people don't have comments; sometimes silence IS the response, or they are just too busy to respond.
- Coordinate this process with previously scheduled meetings in the region.
- Consider renaming the Monument at a later time. This process is too fast. If you're going to take 10 years to put together a Monument Management Plan, then you can take 30 years to change the name.
- The process is going to take longer. I would love a grassroots movement to build what they want.
- Consider having discussions after FestPAC to continue the conversation if communities aren't prepared to have the naming conversation yet.
- The rushing of timelines and fitting in the boxes is like recolonization over, and over again.
- This is a false timeline. It's more important to get this right than to do it by August. People in my community do not want to listen to the Federal government.

⁴ Pius "Mau" Piailug was a Micronesian navigator from the Carolinian island of Satawal, best known as a teacher of traditional, non-instrument wayfinding methods for open-ocean voyaging.

The 13th Festival for Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC)

In June of 2024, agencies engaged communities and individuals at the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) in Honolulu, Hawai'i. FestPAC is the world's largest celebration of Indigenous Pacific Islanders, showcasing the cultural heritage and diversity of the Pacific Islands. The FestPAC hosted more than 2,200 delegates from 27 Pacific nations for 10 days of cultural exchange and celebration, with a total estimated attendance of more than 500,000 people.

The theme of the FestPAC was to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse traditions of the Pacific Islands through the regeneration of Oceania. Agency representatives followed the following principles in their actions, and communications at FestPAC:

- Build respectful and long-term relationships with Indigenous Pacific Islander Communities, Indigenous language experts, voyagers, and others with ancestral, historical, and cultural connections to the area.
- Learn from FestPAC attendees how agencies can support the regeneration of Oceania through the stewardship of the Pacific protected areas, including suggested ways to approach renaming.
- Discuss potential names for the PRIMNM and features within including National Wildlife Refuges within the PRIMNM.
- Communicate clearly how learnings and input from knowledge holders will be used and what process will be used to finalize any decisions.
- Discuss how to properly honor the Hui Panalā'au and Defenders of Wake.

FestPAC Engagements

Robust engagement events occurred at FestPAC, facilitated by staff at NOAA, USFWS, the National Center, DOI Office of Insular Affairs, and CEQ.

Engagement included formal presentations and discussions, a meeting with navigators/voyagers from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Tahiti at the Wa'a Village (Canoe Village) in Kualoa on the island of O'ahu, a workshop with the Youth Pacific Leaders, and informal individual conversations with over 500 people at the Hawai'i Convention Center.

Attendees were invited to share their perspectives, individually or in groups, on how agencies can support the regeneration of Oceania through the stewardship of the Pacific protected areas, including suggested ways to approach renaming. Agencies weaved the renaming discussion into an overarching presentation and discussion on how Indigenous knowledge and values can guide the recognition and management of places and resources. Agencies communicated the names that were suggested by assessment participants, the name suggested by the Federal government, and allowed for additional suggestions.

The agencies held two presentations on the assessment results with formal breakout sessions. Within the formal breakout sessions, the following questions were asked:

- How do you see yourself reflected in the Monument space? And if you do not, what would support that?
- How can those responsible for managing the Monument support the regeneration of Oceania through the stewardship of the Monument?

- What are your thoughts on the proposed names for the monument? Do you have any additional recommendations?
- How can Indigenous knowledge and values guide the recognition and management of these places and resources?
- How can this space help in the perpetuation of voyaging or other cultural practices?

Agency staff made notes of input and name suggestions that spoke to the objectives and discussion questions (with permission of the individual involved in the conversation).

Key Findings

Building on information shared by assessment interviewees, FestPAC participants discussed the following themes and suggestions regarding the new Monument name:

Inclusivity

Any new name should create unity amongst communities with connections to this place. If it's improperly done now, a new name could cause harm or jeopardize relationships between communities. While the Monument name will need to be very inclusive, different Wildlife Refuges, atolls, and other features should be named with local significance in mind. Naming the Monument after one specific individual may not be inclusive of all communities.

Restore Identity and Ownership

All Indigenous Pacific Island communities need to see themselves in a new name to restore identity and provide unity. The name should have meaning and inspire a feeling of connection to the Monument with Pacific Island communities. Renaming is a process that has connection or recognition of the elements in a given place. A common name would build community bond and would help the government to better engage Pacific communities to have discussion. Participants see themselves reflected in the Monument as the Monument includes part of their ancestral pathways and that ownership going forward is important within this space.

Honoring Voyaging and the Diversity of Connections to the Monument

Monument managers learned from assessment interviewees that honoring the tradition of voyaging and navigation is critical. Dialogue with FestPAC participants expanded understanding of this theme. While some felt that Pacific Island communities could see themselves in using voyaging in the name, others hesitated because not all Pacific Islanders are voyagers and may not identify themselves in that way. Because not all individuals with cultural connections identify as voyagers, a new name should support both voyaging, and the diversity of connections communities have to this place. Some voyagers liked Pacific Heritage Marine National Monument since it was inclusive of all cultures and uses of the Monument.

Moreover, Indigenous Pacific Islanders do not traditionally recognize the arbitrary grouping of the islands included in the Monument, which was established solely by the U.S. Government. Voyagers explained that they did not travel through most of the Monument. There are only specific islands, such as Wake Island, that voyagers travel to within the Monument. Indigenous Pacific Islanders shared that they are more interested in renaming or using traditional places names for the individual islands, atolls, reefs, and other natural features in the

area rather than renaming the Monument, a process that could occur in the future, and over time, in a culturally appropriate way.

Language

While a significant number of assessment interviewees suggested that utilizing an Indigenous language or languages would be extremely important, conversations amongst FestPAC participants highlighted how difficult it would be to choose just one Indigenous language. Based on dialogue at FestPAC, especially with the voyaging community, the agencies learned that choosing one Indigenous language over another for the Monument name may be divisive and cause harm between different communities with different languages. Other participants felt that it was disrespectful to use Indigenous names or methods of naming into a western process.

English may be the most appropriate language to use for the Monument name, because it is a common language in the Pacific; while renaming individual National Wildlife Refuges, atolls, and other features using Indigenous languages could be possible through continued dialog with communities who have connections to those specific places.

Other important points regarding language from participants:

- Many participants agreed that “remote” should not be included in the new Monument name, because it is a western-centric term.
- Some participants suggested words that bridge across Pacific Island communities such as the word “ocean”, since it connects all the Pacific Island communities; and each community has their own word for “ocean”. Another suggested the word “canoe” and maybe in multiple languages.
- Some liked the using the word “Pacifika/Pacifica/Oceania,” but others felt that “Pacifika/Pacifica/Oceania” was too general; and that there is contention around the word “Pacifika/Pacifica” due to its colonial roots.

Participants were also asked how the agencies could best support regeneration of Oceania through the stewardship of the Monument as well as honor Indigenous cultures. Below are key themes and suggestions from participants at FestPAC:

Support Regeneration of Oceania

To support regeneration of Oceania through the stewardship of the Monument, participants suggested to create less barriers to the Monument so that the community can access the Monument and learn more about it. Some suggested including oral histories and visitor centers for further education about the Monument. Participants also encouraged agencies to focus on protecting the resources of the Monument and to preserve cultural identity of the Monument for future generations. Some mentioned needing localized ownership in the islands, especially in the management plans.

Recognize Indigenous Peoples’, Knowledge, and Histories

Indigenous knowledge can guide the recognition and management of these places through honoring traditions and integrating traditional knowledge into resource management. Participants pointed to the collaboration and joint decision-making power of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Some suggested developing a chant that represents all the different islands and connects all the islands through honoring names and languages. The Pacific Islands Bilingual Bicultural Association has a chant that links all Pacific Island communities.

Honoring Voyaging

Participants mentioned that Pacific Islanders are voyagers and the water connects them. Voyaging is different between Pacific cultures, and agencies should engage the communities to gain more knowledge and insight about these areas to include in Monument educational materials. It was suggested to support active teaching of voyaging within the Monument.

FestPAC Report Out Webinar

The USFWS, NOAA, and the National Center co-hosted a webinar to provide an overview on the collaborative renaming process and the agency's recommendations for renaming. They also shared how these recommendations were informed by the National Center's renaming assessment and culture recognition report, along with input collected from attendees at the recent Festival of the Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC) in Honolulu. The webinar was held on August 19, 2024, and a total of 33 individuals attended. Webinar attendees asked several questions which were clarified by the agencies including:

- A participant asked if there would be any change to the management regimes currently in place including allowance of fishing in the PRIMNM?
 - The agencies responded that the authority would remain the same. If a Sanctuary designation is overlaid on the Monument, ONMS will also be a part of the management of the area. Fishery management is not going to be addressed in the renaming process. We are implementing what is currently in the proclamation, which is prohibiting fishing.
- A participant asked if there will be a formal, public announcement of the new name and when.
 - CEQ responded that the new name is going to be decided and announced by the President of the United States. The agencies do not have anything planned until after hearing from the White House.
- A participant asked if the term "marine" only covers the marine environment and not the terrestrial parts of these islands?
 - The agencies responded that the monument is referred to as a "marine national monument", but it does encompass atolls and islands as well. The island refuges include parts of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Several participants were very supportive of the new name. One participant said, *"Great job! Love the name! The process worked very well. I hope they do change the name as soon as possible. Thank you all!"*

Name Recommendation: Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument

Based on the extensive and involved collaborative renaming process conducted over the last 18 months, including group and individual interviews, and public engagement at FestPAC, an interagency group consisting of NOAA, USFWS, Department of the Interior, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality has formed consensus around a recommended new potential name “**Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument.**” This recommendation aligns with Administration and Secretarial priorities, as well as President Biden’s March 24, 2023, Memorandum on Conserving the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Pacific Remote Islands (2023 Memo). It also responds to the request to rename the Monument by the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition and commitment made by Department of the Interior (DOI) leadership to consider renaming the Monument.

The thoughtful selection of the name “Pacific Islands Heritage” is intended to convey a strong commitment by Monument managers to recognize and acknowledge the traditional people, cultures, languages, and resources that have existed in the region for thousands of years and hope will continue to thrive in the future. This process began an important and powerful dialogue with communities about connection to place, traditional uses, and the need to encourage diverse perspectives to inform management of this area.

Because voyaging is only one aspect of the diverse cultural connections and practices that should be honored in a new name for the Monument, the agencies felt that the word “heritage” speaks to the tradition of voyaging, as well as the people, cultures, languages, and resources that have existed in the region for thousands of years and will continue to thrive in the future. They also define it the same way as the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\) defines heritage](#) as “our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.” Additionally, the Agencies’ use of the term aligns with the National Park Service’s National Heritage Areas. These are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Unlike national parks, National Heritage Areas are large lived-in landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Area entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. There is also precedent for using the name Heritage for a Monument or Sanctuary. For example, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council submitted the sanctuary nomination for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in July 2015. On September 6, 2024, NOAA marked a key milestone towards final designation with the release the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The proposed designation would protect the region's important marine ecosystems and maritime heritage resources, support ocean-dependent economies, and highlight the cultural values and connections of Indigenous communities to the area. This proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designation helps to manifest the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to honoring Tribal Nations, respecting Indigenous knowledge, and advancing co-stewardship.

The Monument managers believe that the new potential name and the use of the word heritage is call to action for both managers and the community. The name also aligns with the draft vision for the Monument which is to “*honor the history of cultures whose stories and practices acknowledge the island, ocean, and reef areas within what is now the Monument, as well as perpetuate the practices and*

knowledge of the vast ocean that connects these cultures". Monument managers envision that the Monument should honor the history of cultures whose stories and practices acknowledge the island, ocean, and reef areas within what is now the Monument, as well as perpetuate the practices and knowledge of the vast ocean that connects these cultures.

Following an official renaming of the Monument to highlight the unique heritage traditions of the various Pacific Island communities, managers will work with community to rename specific features of natural and cultural significance within this area in a culturally appropriate manner. This was the most resounding comment from the past 18 months of community engagement—that the cultures and traditions of the first peoples to use these areas should be not only honored but celebrated through collaborative stewardship of the Monument. Moreover, the process of recognizing and incorporating traditional names of the Monument's features should (1) involve extensive engagement with the local communities most closely connected to each feature, both geographically and historically, and (2) take the time necessary to ensure accuracy, reflecting the Pacific Islands' value of process.

Next Steps

NOAA and USFWS created an internal brief memorandum outlining the renaming process and their recommendations moving forward with the intent to share with CEQ by September 2024, with the intent to submit to the President for final decision.

NOAA and USFWS will publish a draft management plan in 2025 that includes community input regarding future naming of places within the Monument and describes the intent to pursue collaborative stewardship of the Monument.