

U.S. CORAL REEF TASK FORCE MEETING

August 20 - 24, 2007

Translating Traditional
Knowledge into Management

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THE SAMOAN EXPERIENCE

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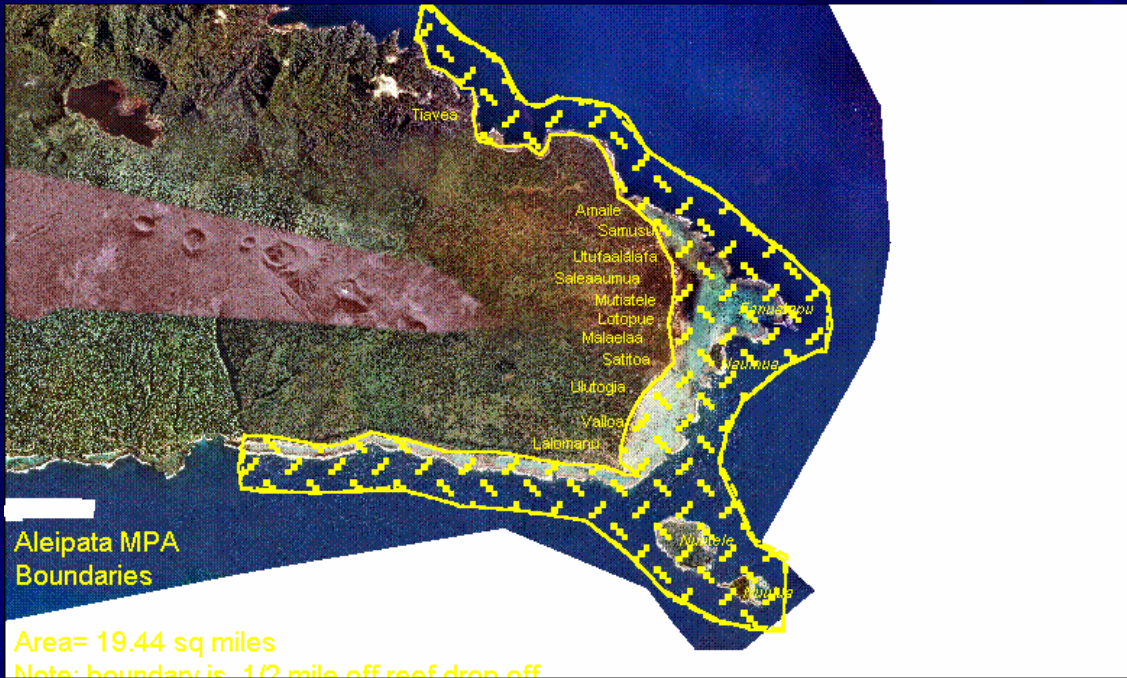
Samoa's Marine Protected Areas Project 'Aleipata & Safata Districts'



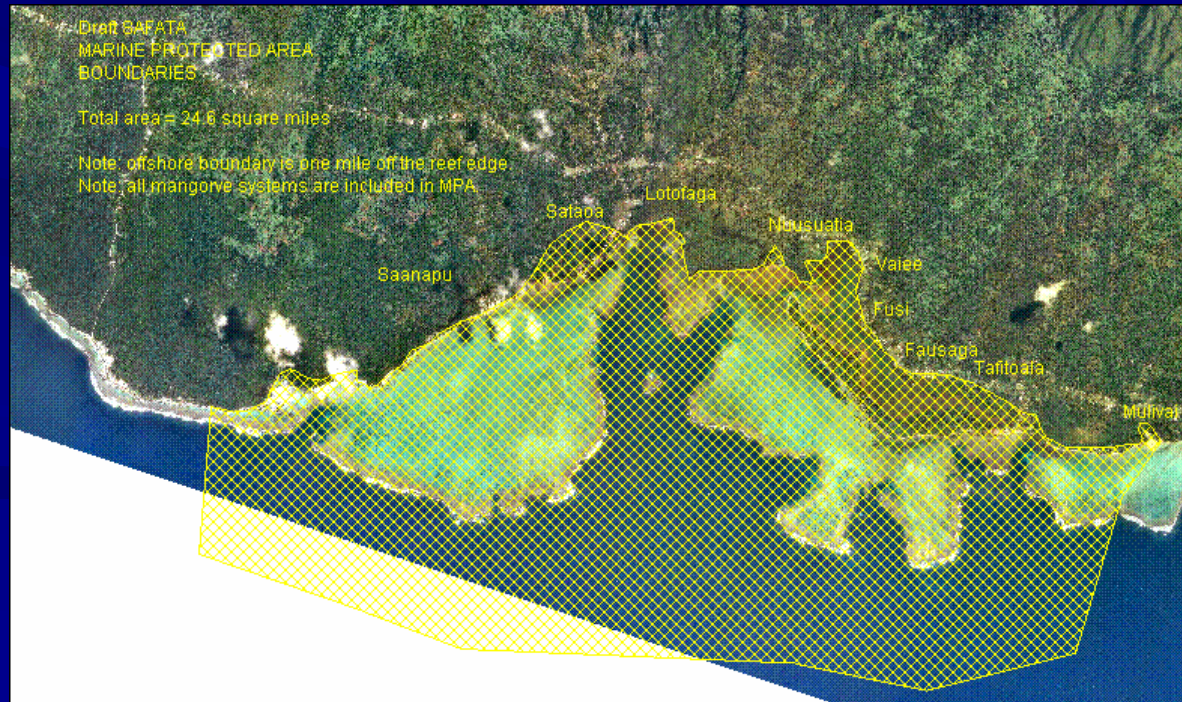
Aleipata & Safata MPAs

- Demonstrates a District-level governance Approach to the Conservation of coastal marine biodiversity (marine ecosystems such as Coral Reefs, Mangroves & Seagrass beds)
- 2 large community-based, multi-use, multi-village MPAs established in 2000
- are examples of a practical traditional management practice for the management of coral reef ecosystems
- Enables the management of a significant area of coastal marine environment (43 sq miles) which has been achievable at a scale useful for biodiversity conservation, tourism and fisheries management

Aleipata District MPA



Safata District MPA



Aleipata & Safata MPAs

- Contain 20 'No-Take-Zones' altogether (selected based on traditional knowledge of the communities)
- Representative of the full range of coastal marine habitats found in Samoa (i.e. largest remaining mangrove forests and extensive areas of coral reef, lagoon and sea grass habitats)
- The Aleipata MPA in particular has also fostered community support and collaborative management for the only offshore islands in Samoa

Traditional Management of marine ecosystems

- Samoa MPAs Project Objective: 'To empower local communities in both Districts to effectively protect and manage coastal marine biological diversity and help them achieve sustainable use of marine resources'
- The *faasamoa* (Samoan way of life) and Christianity is the foundation for the operation of the MPAs (this means that all decisions are made with respect to the traditional chiefly system)

Traditional Management of marine ecosystems ... the setting...

- MPAs Committees have been established which comprise of chiefs representing each participating village
- Committee members are the decision makers and volunteers acting in a role to serve their villages
- Committees developed a common vision & guiding principles, based mainly on traditional knowledge for their MPAs and their interactions with adjacent coastal areas

Traditional Management of marine ecosystems the setting...

- Traditional rules, fines and punishments consistent with faasamoa are used to enforce the rules of the MPAs (as in MPAs Management Plans).
- Clear responsibilities at family, village and district levels with complementary actions by Government are encouraged as the best formula for success of MPAs management.
- Customary land ownership and marine tenure by the respective villages strengthens conservation of marine ecosystems/coral reefs

Successes

- Real progress for conservation and sustainable resource use was & is achieved through:
 1. Very firm traditional chiefly systems within both District MPAs which has enabled strong collaboration, commitment & support of the communities (thus, they on their own can look after their MPAs)
 2. Strong traditional village and district laws combined with strengthening government recognised by-laws (village and potentially district level) which help end the use of all destructive and unsustainable fishing methods and to more wisely use coastal resources.

Successes

3. Increased awareness and respect for the marine environment and heritage as part of the culture.

4. Availability & community access to scientific information, expertise and resources needed to develop the MPAs

(CCSP)

- The 2 MPAs Committees cemented partnerships with the establishment of the MPA Society, and within this structure have formed a Trust Fund for long-term management

Challenges

1. The sectoral nature of government resource management poses significant challenges to communities attempting to deal with multi and cross sectoral issues, particularly in environment, tourism and fisheries (e.g. sandmining, coastal reclamation versus tourism development)
2. The role of volunteerism needs to be encouraged in community-based projects from the start and compensation should not be paid for activities that are the community's responsibility

Recommendations

- To apply traditional knowledge and practices into the existing programme:
 1. It is important to actively involve community members (youth, fisherman, women, chiefs, church ministers) in MPAs activities e.g. biodiversity surveys
 2. Carefully document and conserve cultural protocols, heritage sites and their traditional stories
 3. Enhance the teaching and practice of the Samoan culture within all activities of the MPAs
 4. There is a need to develop MPAs Management Plans from a sound basis of local experience in implementing decisions of priority to local communities

Support needed???

- The kind of support needed to continue or implement Traditional Knowledge and Practices for Management:

1. Financial support to conduct traditional knowledge surveys to identify the gaps, conduct community workshops, trainings to share this knowledge, etc.
2. Technical and advisory support mainly through the provision of scientific information to complement traditional knowledge and practices



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION