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NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Appoints New Advisory Council Members

NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary announced 10 new primary members and 9 alternate members to serve on its sanctuary advisory council. The new appointees bring a valuable range of experience to the council, which provides sanctuary staff with input and recommendations on sanctuary programs and management.

"The Sanctuary Advisory Council is an important link between community and stakeholder groups and the sanctuary management team," said Malia Chow, sanctuary superintendent. "The council serves a very important role in helping to engage communities as we continue reviewing our management plan."

The newly appointed advisory council members are as follows, by position:

- Lāna`i Island (New Seat): Solomon Pili, Kaho`ohalahala; Robin Kaye (alternate)
- Moloka`I Island (New Seat): Walter Ritte; Diane Abraham (alternate)
- Conservation: Barbara "Maka`ala" Kaaumoana, Kaua`i; Thorne Abbott, O`ahu (alternate)
- Ocean Recreation: Douglass Cole, O`ahu; Gordon LaBedz, Kaua`i (alternate)
- Business/Commerce: Tetsuzan Benny Ron, O`ahu; Teresa Leicher, Hawai`i (alternate)
- Citizen-at-Large: Cindi Punihale Kennedy, Hawai`i; Donna Brown, Maui (alternate)
- Whale Watching: James Coon, Maui; Gregory Kaufman, Maui (alternate)
- Tourism: Kimokeo Kapahulehua, Maui; Gavin Key, Hawai`i (alternate)
- Honolulu County: John "Jack" Kittinger, O`ahu
- Commercial Shipping: Richard Davison, O`ahu
- Research: Hannah Bernard, Maui (alternate)

Established in 1996, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council provides advice and recommendations on managing and protecting the sanctuary. The council is composed of 16 government and 18 non-governmental representatives. Serving in a volunteer capacity, the council members represent a variety of local user groups, as well as the general public. Sanctuary advisory council primary and alternate members serve two-year terms and meet several times per year in public sessions.

More than 40 people applied for positions on the council, and two new seats were added for residents of Lāna`i and Moloka`i.

"These two new seats will enable community members of both islands to work with other community representatives from throughout the state to help plan the future of their national marine sanctuary," Chow said.

All new members will be seated at the next council meeting on April 4-5, 2011 in Kihei, Maui. For the complete agenda and for more information about the meeting please visit the sanctuary online at <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary is administered by a

partnership between NOAA and the state of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. The shallow, warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands constitute one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats.

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