

**JOB PROGRESS REPORT
COORDINATION PROJECT SEGMENT**

STATE: Territory of Guam

PROJECT NO.: F-1R-5

SUB-PROJECT NO.: F-3

JOB NO.: 1

JOB TITLE: Technical Guidance to Projects Affecting Guam's Fish Resources (2710,2720)

PERIOD COVERED: October 1, 1995 to September 30, 1996

BACKGROUND

The Division of Aquatic & Wildlife Resources' (DAWR) professional Fisheries Staff devoted a significant percentage of their time and effort to technical assistance to fulfill the statutory responsibility to review and comment on development plans, rezoning applications, and various permit applications. Because of the size and complexity of some of these developments, the Fisheries Staff's review responsibility requires a continuing commitment that could extend even beyond project completion.

The Division's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) within the Administration/ Coordination Section continues to handle the majority of the technical assistance. During the last quarter of the fiscal year, the lone TAP program employee resigned, shifting the workload to other Division staff. A local appropriation provides funding for a technical assistance staff, a Biologist II. He is primarily responsible for reviewing projects submitted to the Advisory Review Committee (ARC) for action by the Territorial Land Use Commission and for the review of clearing and grading permit applications. He also participates in the review of other permit applications and environmental documentation. The professional staff within the Fishery Section provide technical support to the TAP staff, and occasionally takes the lead in the review of projects involving their particular expertise, such as those that may have endangered species (sea turtles) impacts and those involving coral reefs.

OBJECTIVES

1. To minimize adverse environmental impact resulting from the construction of recreational, commercial, residential, industrial or public utility facilities.
2. Provide technical assistance to military and civil agencies relative to the management and protection of fish resources.

FINDINGS

Fisheries Staff have been actively involved in the technical guidance function during this segment. Numerous development plans, impact statements, and permit applications have been submitted to the Division for review. Field investigations and meetings with responsible agencies have been conducted in many cases as a part of the review process.

Various Fisheries Staff members actively serve as members of the following groups:

1. Recreational Water Use Master Plan
2. Western Pacific Regional Pelagic Plan Monitoring Team
3. Western Pacific Regional Bottomfish Plan Monitoring Team
4. Federal Data Coordinating Committee
5. The Coral Reef Initiative Technical Support

Members of the Fisheries Section attended 47 meetings and made 17 field inspections during FY97 pertaining to the protection of Guam's natural resources. Additionally, staff have continued to actively consult with various civil and military agencies on environmental matters. Division staff maintain close liaison with the Department of Land Management, Department of Parks and Recreation, Guam Bureau of Planning, Guam Environmental Protection Agency, University of Guam, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Air Force regarding matters of environmental concern. In addition, staff members actively consulted with the numerous off-island visitors, representing various agencies and organizations, who visited during the segment.

Considerable public contact was maintained by Fisheries Staff during the reporting segment. In addition to occasional interviews on radio, television, and in the newspaper, they also gave talks to a number of civic groups, and schools.

Some specific Technical Assistance activities provided by the Fisheries Section included:

- 1) Technical staff continued to invest considerable time in monitoring and evaluating the environmental impacts associated with the Piti Underwater Observatory (PUO). This included extensive photographic review of corals transplanted and determinations of damage. Regular field inspections were made to ensure construction work was complying with permit requirements.

- 2) Technical support to the Divisions TAP staff who represents the Department and the Division on the ARC, which met biweekly to review applications for rezoning, variances, and various types of development.
- 3) Offered comments and provided information to the Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WESPAC) and the Plan Monitoring Team (PMT) on projects for bottom and pelagic fisheries. Information was provided on market sampling, and stock assessment, and from recreational and near-water commercial vessels. Staff attended 5 off-island, Council related meeting.
- 4) Reviewed and commented on four proposed bills that would affect fisheries.
- 5) Investigated three suspected fish kills in island waters during the year.
- 6) Responded to 13 requests for information on laws and regulations pertaining to fish, endangered species, fishing and importation of fish.
- 7) Made 27 presentations on fish resources to other organizations or groups during the year.
- 8) Provided statistical data on fisheries issues to the Bureau of Planning and Department of Commerce on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project needs to continue to support the TAP. The TAP responsibilities should be reassigned to Agricultural Development Services with technical support from DAWR. The issues typically addressed more specifically deal with their area of responsibility but will still require close coordination.

PROGRAM COST

The estimated cost of the Technical Assistance project under F-1R-5 is \$24,000.

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