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The establishment of the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve (Reserve), and steps taken to designate it as a proposed sanctuary, represent a long and extensive history of public consultation and involvement. As a result of this outreach, nearly 52,000 public comments were received in support of strong protection of NWHI.

Since 2000, NOAA conducted over 100 meetings with interagency partners, the Reserve Advisory Council, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, Native Hawaiian community groups, stakeholders, and the general public. The purpose of the meetings was to identify issues related to designating a proposed sanctuary and to solicit input on developing the alternatives to be considered in a draft environmental impact statement. Furthermore, these stakeholder groups helped prepare a draft management plan for the proposed sanctuary, which serves as the basis for the Monument Management Plan.

Monument regulations established as a result of Presidential Proclamations 8031 and 8112 and codified in 50 CFR Part 404 reflect input received during agency and public participation. After the Monument was established, public informational meetings were held on all main Hawaiian Islands to inform the public. A total of 471 people attended. Overall, the establishment of the Monument and the regulations codified under 50 CFR 404 were well received by the public, most of whom supported strong protection of the ecosystem of the Monument.

In addition, in December 2006, FWS released the draft Midway Atoll NWR Interim Visitor Services Plan proposing small-scale visitation at Midway. The draft Interim Visitor Plan was publicly distributed and received over 6,000 comments during the review. This interim plan was finalized in May 2007 and a final plan is incorporated in the draft Monument Management Plan.

On April 4, 2007, FWS and NOAA issued a *Federal Register* notice (72 FR16328) to prepare the Monument Management Plan and associated EA for the Monument. The notice stated that “It is the intent of the Co-Trustees to integrate agency planning and operational needs into a single Monument Plan. A draft Monument Plan [and associated environmental assessment] will be distributed for public review and comment early in 2008.” The public was directed to focus additional comments “on any new environmental issues identified as a result of new information

or changed circumstances since the comment periods identified above.” The public comment period for this notice ended on June 4, 2007. A scoping report was prepared that summarized all issues raised over the course of this process and a September planning update was publicly distributed that described the primary issues identified during the scoping process.