

Protecting Maun

NOAA's proposal to expand a designated marine sanctuary is unnecessary

By Judy Sobin

This past Saturday, my family and I participated in a sign-waving demonstration to inform our community about NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) proposal to make Maunalua Bay a designated marine sanctuary. I and many others found out about this proposal only two days before the demonstration. I learned that the proposal would impact the entire shore between Makapuu and Waikiki; there could be restrictions on recreational activity throughout these areas.

Our family members are surfers, fishermen, boaters and environmentalists. We are intimately connected to and respectful of Maunalua Bay and Oahu's entire south shore. While establishing a marine sanctuary seems benign on its face, perhaps even a good way to preserve our ocean resources, the restrictions this plan would place on our quiet enjoyment of our ocean resources would be much too onerous and entirely unnecessary.

How could this vast change even be a proposal with so little information to the community?

I am a Hawaii Kai resident, Kamiloiki Elementary School Community Council chair-



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woman, a real estate agent, a mother and grandmother, a stand-up paddler and boater — and had absolutely no clue about this proposal until last week.

Here's what I found on the ONMS website:

The sanctuary nomination process is intended to focus on nominations generated "collaboratively by communities and coalitions of interested parties." The nomination must be posted in

full on the ONMS website. But, I have found no posting of any nomination to assign any area in our islands as a marine sanctuary.

If there has been a nomination of a Hawaii sanctuary, the process in this community has been the opposite of collaborative. Instead, the frustrations of a relative few who have been unwilling and unable to engage the larger community in their vision for Maunalua Bay are abusing the process and manipulating NOAA to fit their own ends.

The ONMS website lists six steps for the nomination process:

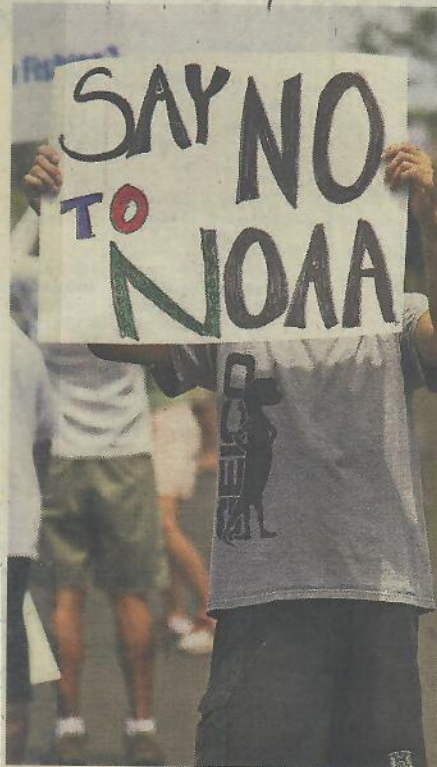
>> The community nominates after developing broad-based support. If there has actually been a nomination in Hawaii for any site including Maunalua Bay, it has not been developed with broad-based support.

>> A formal request is made to NOAA and is posted on the ONMS website. "All nominations will be made publicly available on

U.S. NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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Maunaloa Bay

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Hawaii Kai residents stood along Kalanianaʻole Highway to protest a proposal to create a special sanctuary designation for part of Maunaloa Bay.

the ONMS website." There is no nomination that has anything to do with Hawaii on the website.

>> NOAA reviews the nomination for sufficiency against the criteria and management considerations established by NOAA.

>> Nominations NOAA determines to be sufficient will then be reviewed against national significance criteria.

>> Management considerations cited in the rule are then reviewed.

>> If each of these steps is successful, the site is added to NOAA's inventory, allowing it to designate the area as a marine sanctuary.

I believe that our East Honolulu community — like most communities in Hawaii — has very little knowledge about this marine sanctuary nominating process. Where did this June 19 deadline for public comment come from? How can we get answers? How can we trust an agency that does not follow its own administrative rules?

Maunaloa Bay is our treasure and our playground, and we take good care of it. We are respectful. We take only the fish we eat, we care for the reef and we get along with each other. We already have rules and regulations that maintain the sanctity of our bay and we follow them. Our state Department of Land and Natural Resources enforces these rules, and we recognize and respect their authority. For many of these officers, protecting their ocean is more than a job; it is their passion.

We already have a sanctuary at Maunaloa Bay. This further designation is unnecessary and unwanted. The nomination should be rejected as it does not have broad-based support and would hurt the very community it is attempting to help.