

HAWAII FISHING NEWS, JUNE 2008. ROBERT DUERR's SPLASH COLUMN:

Pew Wants More MPAs. Pew's Global Ocean Legacy wants to make the Mariana Islands a national monument. It would make the Mariana Islands the U.S.'s second largest MPA behind the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Jay Nelson, Pew's Ocean Legacy director, says the MPA status would put the Mariana Islands on the map.

Pew was of the main players that persuaded President Bush to preempt public hearings to make the NWHI a national monument under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Pew's director of environment division, Joshua Reichert, outlined his efforts in his August 2006 issue of MPA News article "Anatomy of and Advocacy Campaign." (<http://depts.washington.edu/mpanews/MPA77.htm#Reichert>)

One of the main things he says they did was hire a media consultant. That consultant was Scott Foster who is now the communications director for Pew's Western and Central Pacific Network.

The NWHI has become a "Particularly Sensitive Sea Area." The distinction was given by the International Maritime Organization, affiliated with the United Nations. Beginning May 1, special zones will be mapped for international vessels called "Areas to be Avoided." The designation requires that vessels passing through the area must announce their passage. Reporting begins 11.5 miles outside of the monument borders. The NWHI monument is bigger than 46 of the 50 states. Enforcement will be difficult.

The preliminary plan to manage the NWHI's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument has generated 57,000 comments. Hawaii's Governor Lingle says it's not enough and people should send more. The comments are mostly from people not from Hawaii and environmental groups using electronic chain letters. Want to send a comment email PMNM_MMP_COMMENTS@FWS.gov.