

**U.S. Coral Reef Task Force  
Award Recipients  
Kona, Hawaii  
August 2008**

**OUTSTANDING MANAGEMENT**

**William Walsh, PhD**

Dr. Walsh effectively carried out the legislative mandates of Act 306, which passed in 1998. The Act created the West Hawai'i Regional Fishery Management Area in 1998 and set aside 30 percent of the West Hawai'i coastline as no-take areas for aquarium fish collection. In the process Dr. Walsh effectively weathered some very contentious times, but his wry sense of humor and a lot of hard work, helped him establish the consensus necessary to implement the program. According to monitoring reports published by the State of Hawai'i, the program has been very successful.

**Russell Reardon, Lindy Johnson and Derek Campbell**

On April 3, 2008 the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized Agency of the United Nations, designated the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands or NWHI) as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) which aims to protect the Monument's fragile and integrated coral reef ecosystem from damage by international shipping activities. Only 11 areas in the world, including Papahānaumokuākea have received such a designation and this nomination is being submitted to recognize key members of the NOAA team that were instrumental in contributing to this extraordinary accomplishment.

Lindy Johnson, Derek Campbell and Russell Reardon worked tirelessly to secure the designation for the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) which augments domestic protective measures by alerting international mariners to exercise extreme caution when navigating through the area. The team contributed to crafting two additional measures to help reduce the risk of damage to the Monument from international shipping activities: amending the six existing Areas to be Avoided (ATBAs) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and establishing a ship reporting system for vessels transiting the Monument. The combined legal talent and steadfast work ethic in the field effectively resulted in furthering the conservation of Papahānaumokuākea's fragile environment and preservation of cultural resources and areas of cultural importance.

## **OUTSTANDING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

### **Sara Peck**

In her more than ten years of service to the West Hawai'i community, Sara has promoted coral reef conservation in many ways, and was instrumental in assisting the West Hawai'i community efforts for addressing concerns over the impacts of aquarium fish collecting in West Hawai'i. She has developed, and sustained, high-quality education and outreach programs for raising public awareness of the need for coral reef conservation, both for local community members and for visiting tourists. These include the following programs: "*ReefTeach*" an ongoing volunteer program designed to reduce coral trampling at an intensely used, highly popular shallow water snorkeling area; "*ReefWatch*", an ongoing monitoring program, which trains volunteers to monitor near shore waters and intertidal areas for fish, invertebrates and alien algae, and; "*Aloha Kai*", an innovative cross-peer approach, teens teach elementary students to respect and conserve marine life.

### **Judith C. Lang, PhD**

Judy Lang has spent the majority of her life learning about coral reefs and generously sharing her knowledge, enthusiasm, and intellect with students, resource managers, policy makers, fellow scientists, and the general public. Widely published in a variety of books, papers, reports, manuals, and even shareware, she is a coral reef scientist with broad experience in stony coral behavior, ecology, biogeochemistry, taxonomy, bleaching, and monitoring.

Judy's experience and contributions to coral reef conservation awareness are vast, and her most recent contribution entitled *Our Reefs: Caribbean Connections* premiered earlier this month at the 11<sup>th</sup> ICRS in Fort Lauderdale. This 3,000 square foot display will make its way through the Caribbean and create wonder and awe, inspiring greater respect and understanding of coral reefs in the many new places it will travel.

Judy's generous contributions of self have truly made an impact, especially in translating coral reef science to all levels of society, from school children who take the messages home to their parent and grandparent fishers, to local and national policy makers. Judy is truly making a difference in the human dimension of future as well as current management and in our scientific understanding necessary for reef conservation and protection.

### **David Raney**

Dave Raney has served as a voice for the non-governmental community to the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force at all but one of the USCRTF meetings. His dedication to both the issues and the people involved has been inspiring. He brings issues before the USCRTF formally through the public comment process as well as through his committed engagement with the USCRTF Education and Outreach Working Group. Dave speaks with passion and always has a creative and insightful way of bringing the issues to the

fore. He serves as volunteer and representative of Sierra Club and ReefCheck chapters in Hawaii. Largely working in Hawaii, his efforts have touched the Pacific and Atlantic Caribbean regions. Dave is an individual who works with partners to find solutions and celebrate successes.

## **OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEVEL PARTICIPATION**

### **Tina Owens**

Tina has been the driving force behind the Lost Fish Coalition since its inception over ten years ago, and has been very effective as a grassroots organizer and lobbyist. In 1998, The Lost Fish Coalition helped organize community support to successfully lobby the State Legislature for passage of Act 306, which set aside 30 percent of the West Hawaii coastline as no-take areas for aquarium fish collecting. Since then she has remained active in issues regarding aquarium fish collection, including legislation passed in 2008. In recent years she helped mobilize local community support for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, and the State of Hawai'i Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine Refuge, and has encouraged public participation in the numerous public meetings culminating in the designation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine Nation Monument.

Tina has tackled tough issues with energy, courage, and persistence and little or no funding. She serves as an outstanding example of how one person can make a real difference at the community level and beyond.

## **OUTSTANDING SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **Richard Dodge, PhD**

Dr. Richard Dodge not only spearheaded the drive to bring the 11<sup>th</sup> International Coral Reef Symposium Meeting to the U.S. for the first time in more than 30 years, but he also successfully chaired its planning and execution. He led a team of scientists, predominantly from Florida, who planned a novel scientific program, interesting and informative field trips and workshops, and the first attempt to include such a major presence of commercial and educational exhibits at an ICRS in recent memory.

In the interim, Dr. Dodge has worked tirelessly to ensure that this would indeed be the biggest and best ICRS ever, affording more participation from more participants than at any previous ICRS.

During much of the almost four years that Dr. Dodge was leading monthly ICRS planning meetings, he also managed to co-edit with Dr. Bernhard Riegl, the just-released *Coral Reefs of the USA*, the first volume of a series entitled *Coral Reefs of the World*, published by Springer.

Dr. Dodge was present at the first U.S. Coral Reef Task Force meeting held at Biscayne National Park, and has attended all but one since, that absence due to Hurricane Wilma. His support of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force has been unwavering.

### **Jo-Ann Leong, PhD**

Dr. Leong is a nationally and internationally respected scientist and has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing ecosystem science to protect coral reefs at the local, national and international level.

Dr. Leong, one of the few female directors of a marine institute, has earned a tremendous amount of respect from her scientific colleagues in her role as Director of the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB). During her six-year tenure, she quadrupled the HIMB budget (from \$4.5M to \$18M in multi-year grants) and recruited and led a team of scientists to use state-of-the-art scientific tools to develop a research program that has advanced our understanding of ocean ecosystem science.

In addition, through a partnership with NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Dr. Leong has embarked on a project to address coral reef management questions utilizing equally western scientific methods and traditional Hawaiian knowledge through modern practitioners. This approach establishes an important framework and basis on which future research programs can be developed.

Dr. Leong has made an outstanding contribution to protecting and conserving coral reef ecosystems of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands by leading a team of researchers which provided the scientific support for the establishment of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.