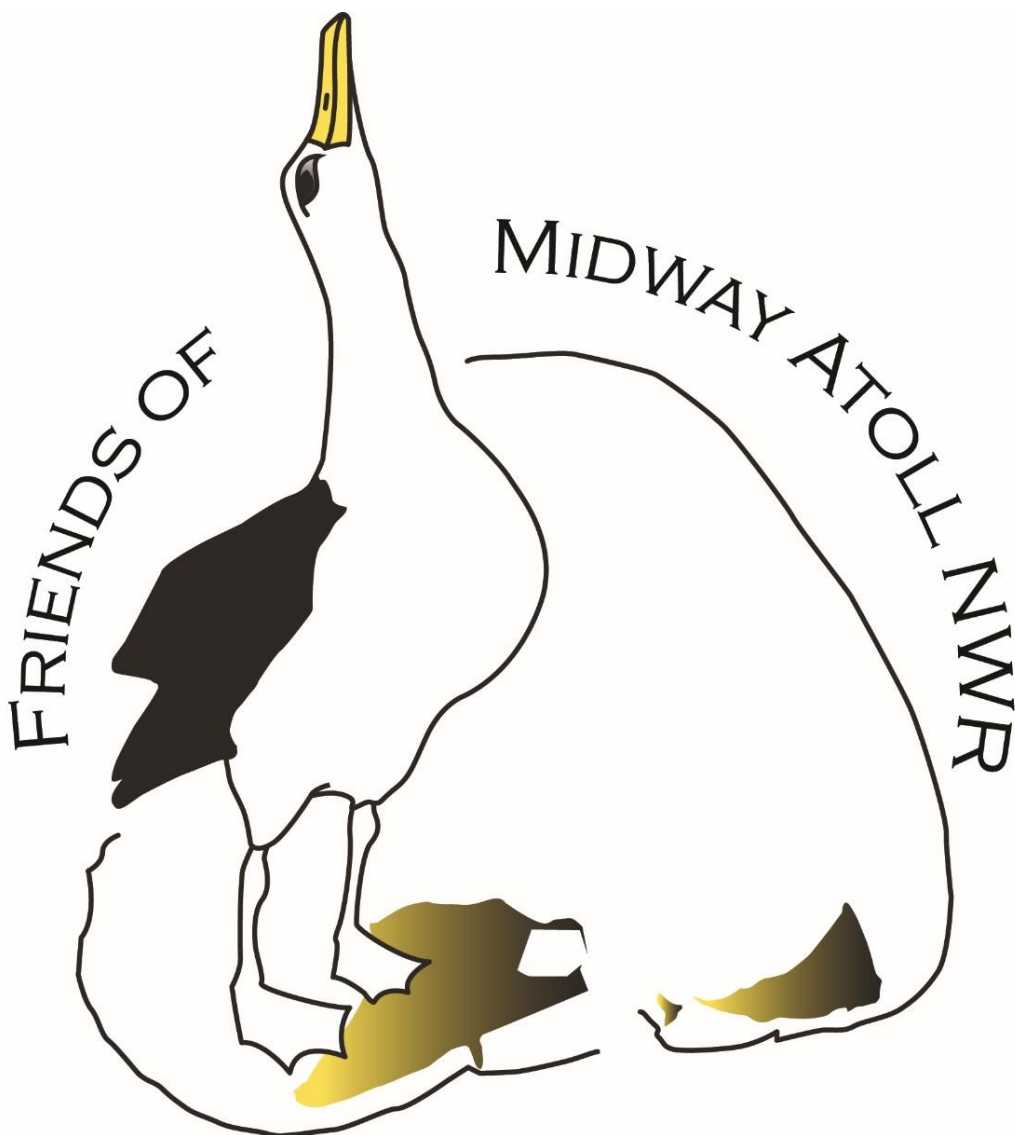


STRATEGIC PLAN
FRIENDS OF MIDWAY ATOLL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE / BATTLE OF MIDWAY NATIONAL MEMORIAL
SEPTEMBER 2015



STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE FRIENDS OF MIDWAY ATOLL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE / BATTLE OF MIDWAY NATIONAL MEMORIAL

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This Strategic Plan describes how Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge / Battle of Midway National Memorial (FOMA) will achieve priority goals and objectives consistent with its vision and mission over the next three to five years. The plan will be reviewed at least every two years to ensure that FOMA's actions are aligned with its strategic goals.

THE REFUGE

The Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (MANWR) is unique in the Refuge system. It is an unincorporated U.S. territory and the only island in the Hawaiian archipelago that is not part of the State of Hawai'i. A total of 1,472 terrestrial acres are protected by the Refuge, but the full extent including marine areas is 580,740 acres. Midway hosts the world's largest albatross colony and is a breeding site for 19 seabird species, totaling nearly 3 million birds. Its reefs teem with more than 250 species of fish. The area supports 29 species of coral and more than 100 species of algae. Midway is rich in human history as a former Naval Air Station and subsequently as a Naval Air Facility, during both peace and wartime eras, and was the site of the pivotal WWII Battle of Midway. At one time, more than 5,000 people called Midway home.

Midway is the only Refuge responsible for managing an airport. In close cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration and contractor Chugach Industries, the Refuge provides an emergency landing site for airplanes. The Refuge oversees a five-year contract to manage much of the on-island infrastructure. On average, 40 people reside on Midway at any one time; only five of those are Refuge staff. The Refuge currently has five volunteers in addition to staff.

REFUGE HISTORY

In 1988, the U.S. Navy invited USFWS to establish a National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on Midway to protect its wildlife. The Navy and USFWS reached agreement on designation of the Overlay Refuge while the Navy retained primary jurisdiction until 1996, when an Executive Order transferred full jurisdiction to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In 2000, the Secretary of the Department of Interior designated the Atoll as the Battle of Midway National Memorial in recognition of the courage and sacrifice of those who fought at Midway. In 2006, the Papahānaumokuākea National Monument was established. The Monument is co-managed by three trustee agencies – the State of Hawai'i, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In 2010, the Monument was inscribed as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

CURRENT REFUGE CHALLENGES

Human activity on and off the Refuge has created a suite of enormous challenges for the USFWS including visitation, building management, managing native biota on the Refuge. USFWS management involves multiple national and international designations and requires collaboration among diverse agencies and organizations (e.g., U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard,

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, State of Hawaii, International Midway Memorial Foundation and others).

Visitation: Midway is extremely remote making visitation (access by the public or permitted activities) expensive. From 2000-2008, the Refuge was under contract with Midway Phoenix Corporation (MPC) to provide a Visitor Services operation. The Clipper House dining establishment and Captain Brooks buildings were built by MPC. A few cruise ships stopped at Midway but that was deemed too disruptive to the Atoll. From 2008-2012, visitors and other permitted activities occurred under direct USFWS management. Battle of Midway anniversaries have typically brought increased numbers of visitors to the Refuge. In 2012, due to severe budget reductions, the USFWS closed the Refuge to visitation and most other permitted activities. The Refuge receives requests daily for access to Midway by different interest groups, including former residents, tour groups, researchers, and media.

Buildings: The Atoll has 249 buildings, most in serious decay. Some buildings, such as the Seaplane Hangar are historically significant. Most buildings have costly environmental issues such as lead paint or asbestos tiling. The Refuge faces pressure from some former Midway residents, who believe that some of the buildings should be restored; cost estimates for restoration exceed \$200 million for individual buildings.

Wildlife and Habitat Management: Midway faces wildlife management challenges similar to other refuges, such as protecting endangered species (monk seals, sea turtles) from human traffic and responding to botulism outbreaks. However, responding to Laysan duck botulism incidents can be extremely demanding on staff and volunteer time. Other challenges such as lead abatement from old buildings are more complex and there are no easy answers. A significant issue for the Refuge is marine debris, which albatross mistake for food and feed to their chicks. Each year, the island is littered with chick and adult carcasses, bellies full of plastic. As public awareness about the issue has grown, many feel compelled to help in some way. Over the years of human occupation, many different plant species have been introduced to the Atoll. The Refuge has made major strides in removing *Verbesina encelioides* from Sand and Eastern Island but vegetation management for wildlife benefit is an ongoing challenge.

FOMA FORMATION, ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In June 1999, a group of volunteers visiting the Atoll recognized the need and potential to help the Refuge. Later that year the Friends of Midway Atoll NWR was formed. Founding Board members included: Molly Krival, Darlene Moegerle, Ellen Mashburn, and Ray Sweeney. As of April 2015, the Board consists of 11 members with a diverse set of experiences and expertise.

Some of the Refuge's challenges (such as building management) are beyond the scope of potential FOMA actions. The value of a Strategic Plan is to understand where and how FOMA can best support the Refuge. To date, FOMA has concentrated its support in providing funding for Refuge-specific projects focused on wildlife management and outreach. Most revenue comes from sales at the on-island store, membership dues, and donations. FOMA has occasionally written grants for specific purposes.

Key Accomplishments:

Laysan Ducks: Once found throughout the entire Hawaiian archipelago, human activities reduced the worldwide population to only 11 birds, all on Laysan Island. USFWS started a translocation program to help recover this endangered species. In 2004 and 2005, a total of 42 birds were brought to Midway. FOMA helped purchase 30 radio transmitters to help USFWS monitor the ducks and record the growth and sustainability of the flock. FOMA also purchased water "guzzlers" to provide a clean source of water to help reduce the impacts of botulism.

Verbesina Eradication: Invasive plants destroy habitat on Midway. *Verbesina encelioides* (golden crownbeard) had taken over many nesting areas formerly used by albatrosses. FOMA obtained funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to help with *Verbesina* eradication. These early efforts helped the Refuge secure additional funds to clear many acres of this noxious weed. USFWS staff are documenting the return of the albatross to areas previously dominated by *Verbesina*.

Annual Albatross Count: FOMA supports scientific research to help better manage the atoll's extraordinary wildlife. Each year on Midway, all albatrosses are counted. FOMA has helped cover the cost of expenses for a crew of 10-12 dedicated volunteer counters.

Bicycles: The easiest and one of the greenest ways to get around the atoll is by bicycle. FOMA purchased 10 bikes and baskets for use by volunteers and staff of the Refuge.

Outreach & Education: Midway's remoteness makes sharing information about its incredible history and wildlife challenging. The *Gooney Gazette II* newsletter and FOMA website help keep members up to date. FOMA helped fund renovation of the Visitors' Center on the atoll and also purchased frames to display the murals removed from the Midway Theater and that are now housed at the Pacific Aviation Museum in Honolulu.

Marine Debris: FOMA created an educational online game called *Race to Midway* which was designed to educate students about marine debris issues.

Gift Shop: FOMA operates an on-atoll gift shop, which is located in the "Midway Mall." The gift shop offers the occasional visitor, on-island contractors and staff a way to take a little bit of Midway home with them when they leave. Funds from the store support FOMA actions.

PROCESS: In December 2012, seven of nine FOMA Directors met in Honolulu to develop a Strategic Plan. The "Honolulu Draft" benefited from input and facilitation by USFWS Refuge staff but was never formally adopted. In March-April 2015, seven of eleven Directors convened on Midway to review previous planning efforts and prepare a draft Strategic Plan for consideration by the full Board. The 2015 process used the Honolulu Draft as the starting premise for its work. Board members reviewed the principles of SMART planning (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, and Timebound) as well as other key discussion points from the Honolulu Draft. Work on the Strategic Plan benefited from discussions with and involvement by USFWS staff on Midway. The entire Board reviewed and discussed the Midway Draft at subsequent Board meetings and adopted it in September 2015.

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE FRIENDS OF MIDWAY ATOLL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
VISION, MISSION & VALUES**

VISION

Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge will play a pivotal role in the conservation and restoration of Midway's natural and historic resources through financial and volunteer support, dynamic outreach and education, effective advocacy in the support of Refuge programs, assistance in the development of an inspirational visitor program and productive collaboration with diverse partners.

MISSION

Founded in 1999, the Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is:

To support Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge / Battle of Midway National Memorial in its efforts to preserve, protect and restore the biological diversity and historic resources of Midway Atoll, while providing opportunity for wildlife-dependent recreation, education, cultural experiences, and scientific research.

VALUES

- Focus on highest priority actions
- Be a voice for our members
- Share science-based information
- Operate with integrity
- Be accountable with our actions and resources

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE FRIENDS OF MIDWAY ATOLL
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
GOALS, ACTIONS & STRATEGIES**

GOAL 1: Support activities of the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge / Battle of Midway National Memorial consistent with FOMA mission via financial contributions and advocacy.

Objective 1-1: Increase capacity at the Refuge by supporting volunteer programs.

Action 1-1(a): Provide stipend support for volunteer(s).

Objective 1-2: Provide direct financial support via revenues raised from the Midway store, grants, membership dues, donations, and other appropriate funding mechanisms.

Action 1-2(a): In cooperation with MANWR Manager, develop annual FOMA budget priorities. Respond to additional opportunities as appropriate. Identify priorities that require outside funding. Research potential grant sources. Write and submit grants or contract with grant writer if appropriate.

Action 1-2(b): Establish and document best practices for retail store management.

Action 1-2(c): Conduct annual (or as needed) review of on-atoll and online store operations.

Action 1-2(d): Create online store.

Action 1-2(e): Develop marketing approaches for Loebel-Fried print, photography, and other art work.

Action 1-2(f): Explore creation of donor development program.

Objective 1-3: Honor the history of Midway

Action 1-3(a): Include information about different periods of Midway history on website.

Action 1-3(b): Obtain list and maps of historic structures; include on website.

Action 1-3(c): Work with former residents to document & honor military era on Midway via website.

Action 1-3(d): Participate in and support commemorative events as feasible and requested by MANWR.

Action 1-3(e): Provide support for interpretive historical exhibits.

Objective 1-4: Advocate for MANWR needs at local, regional and national levels

Action 1-4(a): Identify critical Refuge issues and develop appropriate strategies, including alliances with other interested parties.

Action 1-4(b): Collaborate with National Wildlife Refuge Association, IMMF and other related military organizations, Paphānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, and Friends of Hawaiian Islands NWR to advocate for Midway NWR in areas of mutual interest.

Action 1-4(c): Identify & educate key decision makers on important Midway issues.

Strategy i: Oregon-based Board members meet w/ regional USFWS staff - *ad hoc*

Strategy ii: Hawai'i-based Board members meet with Congressional staff - *ad hoc*

Strategy iii: Meet with Congressional leaders in D.C. as feasible.

GOAL 2: Expand FOMA Membership to increase involvement, generate revenue to support our mission and be a voice for the Refuge.

Objective 2-1: Retain all current (FY 2014-2015) members.

Action 2-1(a): Update & maintain an accurate and current membership list.

Action 2-1(b): Send timely reminder(s) for annual renewals.

Action 2-1(c): Send anniversary letters.

Action 2-1(d): Provide initial and ongoing communications to current members:

Strategy i: Send newsletter (2x/yr).

Strategy ii: Send President's communication (1x/yr).

Action 2-1(e): Develop and send out membership survey (1x).

Action 2-1(f): Identify other opportunities for involvement w/ FOMA.

Action 2-1(g): Feature long-time members in newsletter or on website.

Objective 2-2: Gain new and recapture former members.

Action 2-2(a): Identify and solicit memberships from relevant interest groups
(e.g., birders, photographers, former members, veterans, former residents, Hawai'i residents, former visitors and Midway travel companies).

Action 2-2(b): Send survey to former members after website launch.

Action 2-2(c): Send survey to new members - reason for joining and assess interests.

Action 2-2(d): Hold membership drive:

Strategy i: Ask current Members to each recruit one new member

Strategy ii: Ask each Board member to recruit one new member in the next six months.

Action 2-2(e): Include regular Facebook posts about joining FOMA.

Action 2-2(f): Highlight membership information on website.

Action 2-2(g): Complete new brochure and display at Midway store, Visitor Center, Clipper House, Captain Brooks, and Charlie Barracks. Work with USFWS to update USFWS brochure.

Action 2-2(h): Display membership information at appropriate venues
(e.g., Hawai'i Conservation Conference, training workshops, events).

GOAL 3: Develop effective outreach and education program to inform the public about Midway's natural and historic resources and cultural connections.

Objective 3-1: Tailor key messages to different audiences using a variety of methods:

- Midway Atoll has unparalleled natural and historic resources.
- USFWS does an outstanding job but its capacity to accomplish Refuge mandates is severely constrained due to stagnant and reduced budgets. *Key issues* include:
 - Funding / Capacity (including staffing for biological & outreach/education)
 - Invasive species / habitat restoration
 - Visitation
 - Infrastructure, especially historically significant buildings
 - Marine debris
 - Climate change
- FOMA accomplishments

Objective 3-2: Use **website** and **social media** to advance goals and communicate with public.

Action 3-2(a): Complete and launch new website with blog.

Action 3-2(b): Continue active Facebook presence.

Action 3-2(c): Highlight volunteer program / opportunities and provide link.

Action 3-2(d): Use Google analytics to assess what drives people to website.

Action 3-2(e): Keep public informed about key Refuge issues and current events.

Action 3-2(f): Develop nuanced statements regarding marine debris & visitation.

Objective 3-3: Re-launch Gooney Gazette II **newsletter** - bi-annual electronic distribution.

Action 3-3(a): Determine best electronic distribution method.

Action 3-3(b): Link newsletter articles to website blog.

Action 3-3(c): Clean up the FOMA logo graphically.

Objective 3-4: Consider creating a **Midway film** or other video products to highlight MANWR successes and challenges.

Action 3-4(a): Develop list of priority short videos as pilot project.

GOAL 4: Develop and enhance Board capacity to fulfill FOMA mission and achieve goals of Strategic Plan.

Objective 4-1: Develop **recruitment process**, & retention **policies** for the Board.

Action 4-1(a): Identify needs given current membership to address goals in Plan.

Action 4-1(b): Ensure all Board members contribute to FOMA activities.

Action 4-1(c): Consider need for term limits for Board membership.

Action 4-1(d): Consider creating an Advisory Board to expand FOMA capacity to meet goals (e.g., historical, former residents, cultural advisors).

Objective 4-2: Review need to create or update relevant FOMA **policies** and **documents**.

Action 4-2(a): Review and update bylaws to reflect needed policies & practices.

Action 4-2(b): Develop or consider need to revise policies for document retention, fiscal management, website terms of use and privacy statement.

Action 4-2(c): Create documentation for membership, newsletter and website management.

Action 4-2(d): Consider need for Board liability insurance every three years.

Objective 4-3: Identify need for and provide relevant **trainings** for Board.

Action 4-3(a): Send Board member to Friends Academy at NCTC.

Action 4-3(b): Attend Peer-to-Peer workshop(s).

Action 4-3(c): Write grant for Peer-to-Peer workshop in Hawai'i.

Action 4-3(d): Identify and attend appropriate webinars.

Objective 4-4: Ensure Board is kept **current** about key MANWR **issues**.

Action 4-4(a): Hold in-person Board meeting every three years with USFWS staff in Honolulu and Midway.