



NTHMP Newsletter September 2024

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NTHMP Happenings

Recent Updates and Notes for NTHMP



Welcome to the new Bi-Monthly Newsletter for the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, NTHMP!

This newsletter will be a way to communicate recent and upcoming meetings, agendas and topics within the subcommittees, work group and caucus, and work being done by the group as a whole. We will also include work from the NWS Tsunami Program.

Please share any updates or feedback with Sarah (Sarah.Rogowski@noaa.gov), NWS Tsunami Program Analyst and NTHMP Administrator, and Corina Allen (Corina.Allen@noaa.gov), NWS Tsunami Program Manager.

2024 NTHMP Annual Meeting (American Samoa)

by Sarah Rogowski

The 2024 National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP) Annual Meeting was held in American Samoa from July 23-25, 2024. Additionally, a tour of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) and the International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC) on Ford Island at the NOAA Daniel K. Inouye Regional Center (IRC) in Honolulu, HI, took place on July 22 and 26.



Group Photo: NTHMP Annual Meeting Attendees at a ceremonial ground in Pago Pago, American Samoa. July 25, 2024.

Staff from the NWS Weather Service Office (WSO) Pago Pago and the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS) hosted this event, which included representatives from the NWS Tsunami

Program and around 40 attendees representing state and territory NTHMP partners and partnering federal agencies.

Tsunamis pose a major and ever-present threat to U.S. coastlines. This was most recently demonstrated on the morning of September 29, 2009, when a major earthquake generated a destructive, basin-wide tsunami. The tsunami resulted in approximately 190 fatalities across the islands of American Samoa, Western Samoa, and Tonga. In 2022, another tsunami threatened these islands, originating from an undersea earthquake associated with the volcanic eruption of Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai. These events, among others, continue to demonstrate that tsunamis don’t have a season, and those in vulnerable locations should always be prepared to act.

The 2024 NTHMP Meeting in American Samoa aimed to highlight the importance of vigilance against this ever-present threat, particularly for island states and territories across the Pacific and Caribbean. This was the first NTHMP Meeting in its nearly 30-year history to be held outside the Continental United States (CONUS). With over half of the NTHMP’s partners being island states and territories, the meeting emphasized listening to the issues and opportunities faced by these partners, thereby strengthening the relationships and goals of the program.

Travelers connected through Honolulu, HI, on their way to and from American Samoa and had the opportunity to visit Ford Island, where the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) and International Tsunami Information Center (ITIC) are located at the Daniel K. Inouye Regional Center (IRC). They were given a tour of the facility and operations room, met on-duty Watchstanders, and discussed the challenges of seismic and non-seismic analysis, running model data, and making decisions about tsunami services. A similar tour was provided at ITIC, offering an overview of the resources ITIC provides to the Pacific and Caribbean regarding tsunami education and preparedness.

On July 23, the NTHMP meeting kicked off in American Samoa, with an emphasis on island state and territory partners, particularly the hosts of the meeting, American Samoa, whose local villages and culture took center stage. An “Ava Ceremony” was held in Leone Village, the site of multiple fatalities from the September 2009 tsunami, where local chiefs gathered to provide NTHMP members with a unique cultural welcome from not only the High Chiefs of the island but also the Governor of American Samoa, Lemanu Peleti Mauga. After the ceremony, the group met at the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa, where opening remarks were given by Governor Mauga, NTHMP Chair and Pacific Region Director, Ray Tanabe, and NWS Marine, Tropical, and Tsunami Branch Chief, Greg Schoor. Sarah Rogowski, NTHMP Administrator, then led the first-ever Island Caucus Panel, with state and territory island partners (American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, and CNMI) answering questions and discussing needs, challenges, and opportunities within the program. Representatives from FEMA presented the group with an update on the incorporation of detailed modifications to the Tsunami Risk depictions in their National Risk Index (NRI).

The second day of the meeting was held at the U.S. Army Reserve and featured briefings and discussions from each of the NTHMP subcommittees: Mapping and Modeling (MMS), Mitigation and Education (MES), and Warning Coordination (WCS). After the subcommittees conducted their meetings, the Coordinating Committee (CC) met to review and vote on requested items from the subcommittees. Among the endorsed items were recommendations made by an MES Tiger Team for enhancements to the NWS TsunamiReady program, improved methods of communication between the NTHMP and vested stakeholders, and future support for the long-running TsuInfo newsletter. The last day of the meeting was held at the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS), with further discussions on

ways to increase communication between program partners, subcommittees, the Island Caucus, and the NWS, and to review and emphasize priorities and initiatives that strengthen and benefit the program as a whole. The group visited the American Samoa NOAA Observatory on the easternmost side of the island, one of only four NOAA locations in the world that operationally collects and monitors the atmosphere for components such as carbon dioxide, methane, and numerous other gasses. The group also heard the harrowing story of response and survival from a former Emergency Manager in American Samoa who experienced the 2009 tsunami.

Many thanks to Pacific Region Headquarters staff, the NWS WSO Pago Pago, their Meteorologist-in-Charge (MIC), Elinor Lutu-McMoore, and Administrative Assistant, Kara Langkilde, and to ASDHS for meeting hosting logistics and showing the group the true beauty of American Samoa and why our mission in the NTHMP is so important.

Upcoming events

by Sarah Rogowski



Lots of new faces in the Tsunami Program at NWS Headquarters and across the tsunami programs of our states and territories. This provides the opportunity to reinvigorate in new, exciting, and efficient ways. One of my biggest personal goals in this role is more frequent and transparent communication. This will include facilitation of quarterly meetings with the subcommittee co-chairs (being flexible to schedule changes and unforeseen events) as well as with the Coordinating Committee (CC) and sharing information about our subcommittee, caucus, and working group meetings.

Please reach out to the appropriate subcommittee co-chairs with questions or feedback about these meetings.

The next Coordinating Committee Meeting will be held on **October 11, 2024**. Tentative Agenda:

- Review Minutes and Action Items from the Annual Meeting
- Review Work Plans from each sub-committee, work group, and caucus

The NTHMP Administrator and Subcommittee Co-Chairs will begin to (virtually) meet each quarter to help better facilitate and support collaborative work across the program. This newsletter will also share the subcommittee meetings as they are scheduled.

- Co-Chairs held a virtual meeting on Wednesday, August 28.
- Mitigation and Recovery Planning Work Group (MRPWG) held a virtual meeting on August 21
- MES held a virtual subcommittee meeting on September 18.
- MMS held a virtual subcommittee meeting on September 19.

TsunamiReady Updates

by Sarah Rogowski



The NWS and the NTHMP established the TsunamiReady Program in 2001 to encourage and recognize community tsunami preparedness. Modeled on the NWS's successful StormReady® Program, TsunamiReady helps communities minimize the risk posed by tsunamis through better risk assessment, planning, education, and warning communications.

In the Summer of 2023, the NTHMP Mitigation and Education Subcommittee (MES) was tasked with a full-scale review of the NWS TsunamiReady Program Guidelines and application process. The goal of the Program review was to develop recommendations to the NWS Tsunami Program for improvements and enhancements prior to the next formal recognition renewal cycle, scheduled for November 2024. An interdisciplinary Tiger Team, or work group, was formed to perform the review, consisting of 13 MES members representing eight States and Territories and multiple NOAA offices.

The MES work group for the TsunamiReady recommendations reviewed the challenges associated with the Program's administration, incentives for recognition, expansion of the number of participating communities as well as providing reasonable flexibilities for the recognition of new communities and ones undergoing the renewal process. These recommendations, provided to the NTHMP for review and the NWS ahead of the 2024 Summer NTHMP Meeting in American Samoa, expressed the need for innovative approaches to risk communication and delivery of scientific knowledge in addressing tsunami hazard and protecting vulnerable populations. The overarching theme of these recommendations was to continue to build upon past successes and also refining and modernizing Program guidelines and the application and renewal process.

During the Coordinating Committee portion of the NTHMP Annual Meeting, the group voted to endorse the MES Tiger Team recommendations, including:

1. TsunamiReady communities should annually document tsunami public education efforts.
2. Include a checkbox on the TsunamiReady application acknowledging that Local Emergency Manager has informed Floodplain Manager of TsunamiReady designation and available Community Rating System (CRS) Points.
3. 24-hour warning point procedures relating to tsunamis should include specific response actions for all Tsunami Alert Levels from the Tsunami Warning Center (i.e. Information Statements, Watches, Advisories, and Warnings).
4. Following TsunamiReady Recognition, the WCM or designee will work with TsunamiReady communities to identify and document goals and progress made in working towards elements of the TsunamiReady Tier 2 guidelines in the period between each TsunamiReady renewal.
5. Update TsunamiReady application and renewal applications to include a place for a state/territory signatory to sign in confirmation that they have reviewed the application and can attest to the community's completion of all guidelines.
6. Update TsunamiReady application and renewal applications to include a place for documenting that a state or territory tsunami program has been consulted regarding resources available from the state or territory to support attainment or completion of TsunamiReady Guidelines.

Thank you to the Tiger Team for their extensive efforts in support of the TsunamiReady program and of coastal community preparedness.

On the “To-Do” List...

by Sarah Rogowski

The Tsunami Program is a busy one. Corina and I, while still being relatively new to the Program, see some administrative updates that are needed for various documents, email lists, and other aspects of the Program that connect to the NTHMP. Here are a few that we are actively working:



- **NTHMP Webpage:** Recently, the NWS removed a legacy server that hosted a number of webpages, including the legacy NTHMP webpage that everyone was familiar with for a number of years. That server was set for discontinuation back in mid-July, so the Tsunami Program ported over the information to a new site (<https://www.weather.gov/nthmp/>) that maintains a similar structure to the menu options and other included links but with a *look-and-feel* that is more consistent with base NWS webpages.

Although the structure of the webpages and subpage content on the new website is similar, some of the information could not be immediately ported over because of the different page format. At present, we are still sorting through hundreds of archived files to retrieve previous page content, including annual reports, agendas, and notes from previous meetings. *Thank you for your patience as we continue to rebuild this resource!*

- **NTHMP Members (Roster):** There is currently a [Google Form](#) for NTHMP members to complete to help us rebuild our mailing lists and roster. If you know of someone interested or involved in the NTHMP that hasn't heard from us in a while, please share my contact information. (sarah.rogowski@noaa.gov) so I can get to know them and make sure they are in the loop.



TsuInfo Alert - Reminder for Articles

by Sarah Rogowski



[TsuInfo Alert](#) is a bi-monthly newsletter that links scientists, emergency responders, and community planners to the latest tsunami research. This newsletter is published by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Geological Survey on behalf of the NTHMP. It is made possible by a NOAA NWS grant via the Washington Military Department, Division of Emergency Management. Contact Stephanie Earls (stephanie.earls@dnr.wa.gov), Librarian, Washington Geological Survey, to subscribe.

[ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES](#) (via the Washington State's Dept. of Natural Resources)

Have you recently published new tsunami mapping or research? Has your community just held a tsunami preparedness event or training?

If so, please consider submitting an article to TsuInfo. Recommended length is 150-500 words with 1-2 images that include captions and/or photo credit if applicable. Please clearly state authorship and associated organization. Send articles or questions to TsuInfo Editor, [Stephanie Earls](#).

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