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Joint Region Marianas Hosts 10th Annual **Programmatic Agreement Workshop**

ASAN, Guam (Sept. 9, 2022) – Joint Region Marianas (JRM) hosted the 10th Annual 2011 Programmatic Agreement (PA) Workshop at the Sen. Antonio M. Palomo Guam Museum and Education Facility in Hagåtña Sept. 8-9.

The workshop was an opportunity for all PA signatories to evaluate important achievements, assign tasks and review outstanding requirements since the signing of the 2011 PA.

Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson, commander Joint Region Marianas, provided opening remarks which emphasized the significance of these collaborative discussions between the military, signatories and stakeholders.

“We are fully cognizant of the fact that these are important decisions made here that will have positive and lasting impressions on the island and region for generations to come,” he said. “These workshops are not always easy, and we understand the cultural sensitivities of our work here in Guam. However, the challenging conversations that have been brought to the table are important to improve our processes because it is through these productive conversations that we have, and will continue to preserve and protect the cultural resources of the island in the Marine Corps realignment,” added Nicholson.

During the two-day workshop, participating parties focused on best ways to preserve, protect and learn from Guam’s cultural resources, and toured historic sites on Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz (MCBCB) and the cultural repository at the University of Guam.

Several topics were presented during the workshop including updates on archaeological work completed at military construction sites, National Register Nominations, future public outreach projects, and natural and cultural resources management.

The Department of Defense and the Guam State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) continue to work together for the benefit of historic preservation. The annual PA Workshop allows parties to communicate effectively, work together, assess archaeological evidence, and come to agreeable solutions as discoveries and other challenges arise. This year, the decision was made to make this information available to the public.

“The annual workshop is specifically intended for the signatories, however, in the spirit of transparency we agreed that there is genuine benefit to the 2011 PA and to the people of Guam in making this information available to the community,” said Nicholson.

Organizers of the annual workshop shared an online link with stakeholder groups and members of the public who were interested in observing the discussion. Additionally, JRM and MCBCB invited members of the media to a briefing and a tour of culturally significant sites on MCBCB.

“We care about maintaining open and transparent communications with the people of Guam and members of the media,” said Nicholson. “We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the support that we receive from our community as we continue our mission in the defense of the homeland.” Therefore it is vital that we allow the public and media to see firsthand the progress being made to protect and preserve artifacts and cultural resources,” said Nicholson.

Looking ahead, the Navy and Marine Corps will collaborate with the SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) to codify the parameters of access and to improve processes.

The annual workshop is held to share important updates in accordance with requirements to protect and preserve cultural resources in Guam and the CNMI, and to enhance communication among the Department of Defense (DoD), historic partners and signatories to the 2011 PA.

The workshop was attended by representatives from Joint Region Marianas, the government of Guam, the Guam State Historic Preservation office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Marianas, and NAVFAC Pacific, among others.

Additional information can be located at the Cultural Resources Information website at: https://www.navfac.navy.mil/navfac_worldwide/pacific/about_us/cultural_resources.html