



## Brief Summary of Public Engagement

September 2, 2021

Si Yu'us Måasse' for your continued engagement in the Rota Special Resource Study. In mid-September 2020, the NPS held public and agency meetings to present [preliminary study findings and alternative concepts](#). Representatives from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) governor's office, legislature, and agencies, and the Rota Mayor's office participated in agency meetings. Approximately 100 people attended online public meetings. The CNMI Indigenous Affairs Office also arranged meetings on Rota that were held in person and online. In addition to comments from the virtual meetings, the NPS also received about 50 written comments through the project website and email.

The breadth and depth of the comments received were impressive. Among those who commented, support for a potential national park unit on Rota is mixed. Close to half of respondents favor the establishment of a unit, but the majority of these commenters would like to see access to lands preserved for the local community, in particular for cultural and subsistence uses such as hunting and gathering. A little over a quarter of respondents stated their opposition to a national park unit on Rota. The remaining group of commenters (a little over a quarter) requested more information about what an NPS unit on Rota would entail before forming an opinion. Below is a brief summary of the additional comments the NPS received:

**Importance of Rota's resources to the community:** People overwhelmingly agree that the Chamorro sites are special, significant, and should be protected. There is a strong desire to protect the livelihoods of Rota's people today and for future generations, which includes continued subsistence and traditional and cultural uses.

**Local participation in decision-making about a potential national park unit:** Most people in the CNMI and Rota want to make sure they have a say in the process and decision-making related to a potential national park unit designation of their lands and heritage. There are concerns and questions about what federal laws, policies, and regulations would come with a national park unit designation. Many people prefer strong local involvement or less extensive federal involvement. There were also many inquiries about cooperative management—what would be the roles and responsibilities of local people, the CNMI and Rota governments, and the federal government? How would cooperative management work?

**Public input on preliminary alternatives:** Some people think the areas suggested for a national historical park, national monument, or national preserve encompass too much of Rota's lands. Of those people who stated a preference for one of the preliminary alternative concepts presented in 2020, most prefer either no action or a limited national park unit designation, with some additional conditions.

**Need for additional information:** Many commenters are interested in understanding the impacts of a national park designation on the local economy. There is also concern about the accuracy of land ownership data and boundaries that were presented in the preliminary alternative concepts in 2020. Some people requested more information and engagement related to the study to ensure that the study is credible and that the recommendations are well-informed.

Thank you for the time you have spent engaging in this study and for continuing to share your thoughts with us.