

# **NSF Engagement in the Future of Maunakea**

**David Boboltz, Program Director, AST**

**Caroline Blanco, NSF Assistant General Counsel**

**Karen Pearce, NSF Senior Legislative Affairs Specialist**

**AAAC meeting**

**January 26, 2021**



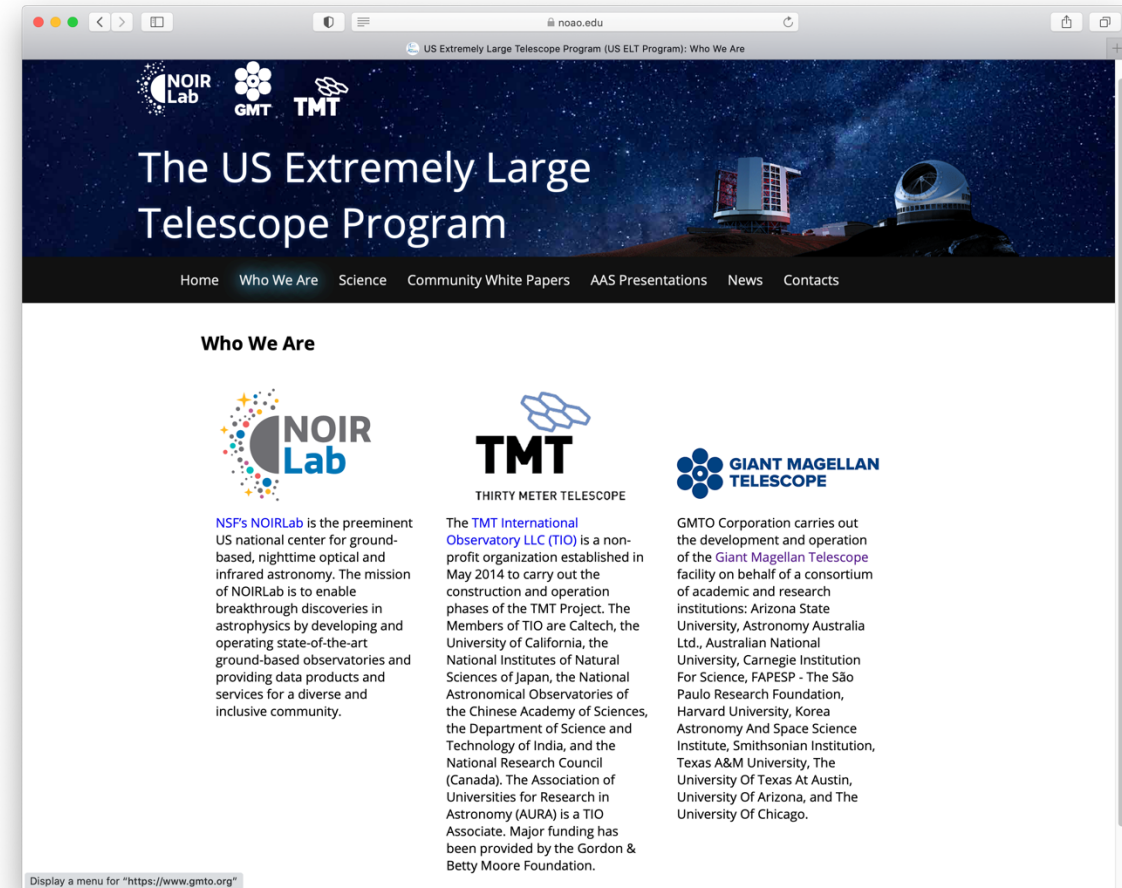
# NSF Entry into the Process

- TMT Protestors block access to Maunakea – [July 2019](#)
- Majority of protestors and law enforcement personnel leave – [Dec. 2019](#)
- Governor Ige met with NSF Director – [Feb. 10, 2020](#)
  - Discussed NSF concerns over existing assets on Maunakea (i.e., Gemini Observatory and MK VLBA)
  - Governor Ige requested NSF engagement in the process
  - NSF Director concurred
- Began meetings with Hawaii stakeholders
  - Sen. Schatz's office
  - Hawaii Speaker of House Scott Sakai
  - University of Hawaii
- Meeting with the Governor – [March 27, 2020](#)
  - Discussion of MK management working group as part of future Blue-Ribbon Panel
  - Governor ultimately went in a different direction



# US-ELT Planning and Design Proposals

- NSF received three Planning and Design proposals for the the US-ELT Program – [May 2020](#)
  - NSF’s NOIRLab, TIO, GMTO
- Due to Privacy Act restrictions NSF would normally not acknowledge receipt of these proposals
  - However, the three proposing organizations acknowledged their submission
  - Therefore, NSF issued a statement on the AST website – [August 13, 2020](#)



# NSF statement on U.S. Extremely Large Telescope program proposals

- Due to Privacy Act restrictions, NSF typically cannot identify the organizations or associated details of funding proposals it receives. However, three organizations publicly disclosed their submission of proposals to NSF for planning and design of a U.S. Extremely Large Telescope program. NSF can, therefore, confirm receipt of proposals from the organizations developing the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT), the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), and NSF's NOIRLab (a federally funded research and development center).
- NSF understands that potential construction of TMT on Maunakea is a sensitive issue and plans to engage in early and informal outreach efforts with stakeholders, including Native Hawaiians, to listen to and seek an understanding of their viewpoints. If NSF ultimately initiates a formal federal environmental review process, this advance outreach would serve as a precursor to it.
- NSF's receipt of a proposal and its initiation of an informal outreach effort are not reflective of NSF's position regarding any project. To request a discussion with NSF related to Maunakea and potential NSF involvement in the TMT project, please contact us by e-mail at: [AST-MK@nsf.gov](mailto:AST-MK@nsf.gov).



# Informal Outreach Effort

- NSF authorized the start of an informal outreach process – [August 2020](#)
- Reasoning:
  1. Didn't want perception of influencing the ongoing Astro2020 Decadal Survey process
  2. Planning and Design proposals do not trigger formal Environmental Compliance process (i.e. NEPA, NHPA Section 106, ESA)
  3. Future of Maunakea important to NSF notwithstanding future NSF involvement in US-ELT
- Efforts led by NSF Core Team: Blanco, Boboltz, Pearce
- Frequent reporting to AST/MPS/NSF management



# Informal Outreach (Talk-Story) Sessions

- August 2020 – present
- Met with broad spectrum of people both pro- and anti-TMT
  - 53 meetings to date with more than 100 individuals
- Virtual Zoom meetings (due to COVID-19)
  - Core Team plus 1 or more interested parties
  - Typical session is 1-2 hours held in the evenings East Coast time
- Meeting format
  - Introductions and background regarding NSF effort
    - **This was taking a long time initially...**
  - Explore their connection to Mauankea
  - Discuss future possibilities for Maunakea – with or without TMT
  - Discuss ideas for meaningful processes and mitigations that could be incorporated in a future formal compliance process (EIS, Programmatic Agreement)



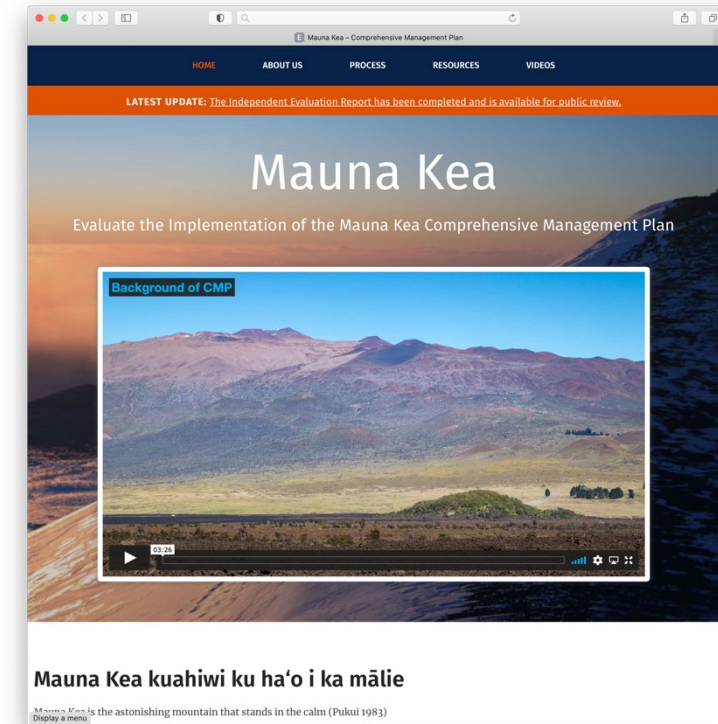
# Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an Extremely Large Telescope?
2. What are these proposals submitted to NSF all about?
3. What are the significant factors that would determine NSF funding of TMT construction?
4. What is the Astro2020 Decadal Survey? Why does NSF care?
5. What does “planning and design” mean? Isn’t TMT past that stage?
6. Now that this proposal has been submitted to NSF, doesn’t it trigger the formal environmental compliance process?
7. Why is NSF undertaking informal outreach at this planning and design stage? Is this standard?
8. How will this informal outreach be used by NSF?



# Ongoing Parallel Efforts to Engage the Community

- Independent Evaluation of Maunakea Comprehensive Management Plan by Ku`iwalu Consulting (Dawn Chang)
  - <https://www.evaluatethecmp.com>
  - Final Report to DLNR issued – Dec. 2020
- Renewal of the Maunakea Master Lease (expires 2033) by the University of Hawaii
  - Will require an EIS
- Development of a new Master Plan for the Maunakea Lands managed by University of Hawaii
- Maunakea Observatories community outreach efforts
- **Need to be conscious of stakeholder confusion/burnout**





# Results and Next Steps

- **Just about everyone we have spoken to has expressed appreciation for our effort (even those adamantly opposed)**
- We take notes at every talk-story session
- Notes are condensed into weekly reports to management
- NSF environmental contractor (Jacobs) is helping to digest notes and reports
  - Looking at trends and themes both pro- and anti-TMT
  - Looking for ideas for potential future mitigation efforts
    - What could be important/meaningful for addressing cultural impacts
- We've spoken to everyone that is active on both sides
  - Need to be proactive and reach out to individuals and groups we've missed out on
- Await decision whether to move forward
  - Community interest (Astro2020), Foundation priorities, New Administration priorities/budgets



# Questions/Discussion

