

SEREHD

Preserving our natural heritage for a sustainable future.



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF Pohnpei 10TH ANNUAL REVIEW

Over 150 people graced the Conservation Society of Pohnpei's (CSP) Annual Review on February 4, 2011 held in the heart of Pohnpei's Botanical Garden once the pride of the Pacific during Japan's occupation of the Pacific islands. The friends who showed up represent community partners, traditional leaders, school teachers, high level policy makers, church leaders, business and private sector supporters, College of Micronesia-FSM, government partners from municipal level to national government and diplomatic community members residing and supporting our conservation work in Pohnpei.

This annual event of the Society has grown compared to a decade ago since we held our first review. The participation showed stronger grass root support with more community partners joining this year's Review. The Review gives CSP a great opportunity to highlight conservation achievements done in partnership in connection with our biodiversity conservation mission. "On behalf of my 15 fellow co-workers I am extremely proud of all the conservation achievement the Society has accomplished for Pohnpei. Thanks to a great team and partners for the support 2010 is marked as the year of greatest biodiversity protection from the Ridges to the Reefs expanding the Pohnpei Protected Area Network".

In connection with the Review CSP took the opportunity to also launch its "Fish for Future" awareness campaign through a produced video, stickers, and t-shirts to educate Pohnpei about fishery challenges for improved solution at policy level and fishers' level. The Board of the CSP and hard working staff wish to thank our partners, and over 109 active individual members who contribute your time, advice and resources to protect nature for livelihoods. The Society closes 2010 with high marks and set the stage for stronger biodiversity conservation partnership.



Director Shed presented CSP's Annual Report to over 150 people.



Government leaders, partners, members, families, students, teachers, and friends listened to CSP's AR message.



FISHERIES MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

The Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), Pohnpei State Office of Fisheries & Aquaculture (OFA) and Dr. Kevin Rhodes of the University of Hawaii at Hilo have joined forces over the past three months to provide municipal leaders, market owners, church groups and local fishing communities an opportunity to voice their concerns about the state of Pohnpei's declining marine resources and identify workable co-management solutions. The workshops, funded by a grant to Dr. Rhodes from the US National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), follow island-wide fisher perceptions surveys conducted by OFA and Dr. Rhodes in 2008. During the 2008 surveys, more than 80% of fishers from 875 households around Pohnpei expressed deep concerns about the declining state of marine resources and the lack of response from legislative leaders to halt these declines. Perhaps more importantly, fishers showed wide support for a range of management measures and had a desire to assist in forming a comprehensive management plan for marine resources. As a result, last year Dr. Rhodes made a funding request to NFWF to provide a forum to further discuss these opinions and initiate a signature drive to pass on to legislators about the crucial need for management improvement. Initial workshops were held with around 20 municipal government leaders, fish market owners and Catholic deacons. The most recent workshops were held in Metipw, Madelonmiw and Pehleing, Kitti. The next workshop is scheduled for 14 April in 2011, U allow those fishers an opportunity to express their concerns and provide ideas and support for solutions. During the course of the workshops, there is a clear recognition of smaller fish sizes in markets, a decline in the number of fish on reefs and declining reef health. Fishers have expressed solid support for a number of management measures already in place, such as marine sanctuaries, but would like to see fish size limits, some restrictions on gear, including mesh size and net length, and some limitations on nighttime spearfishing. All fishing communities were concerned about the rising price of fuel and the lack of response by market owners to improve prices. Market owners, in turn, mentioned difficulties in getting enough fish to meet their needs. Dredging was mentioned as a key cause to declines in reef health. Other ideas that emerged from the meetings were the idea of a fish market owners association and a fisherman's cooperative, similar to the current farmer's cooperative, and the need for greater power sharing between the state and municipalities in monitoring and enforcement, especially of marine sanctuaries. All participants had serious concerns and disappointment about the overall lack of enforcement occurring in Pohnpei. Future workshops will be held in Nett Municipality after the Easter break. Please contact CSP with additional comments or if you would like to attend the upcoming workshops in your area.



Dr. Kevin Rhodes facilitating the fisheries management workshop in Sokehs municipality to over 50 residents.

ANNUAL SPECTACLE OF AGGREGATING GROUPERS IN THE KEHPARA MARINE SANCTUARY

If you ever dive and watch groupers in a spawning aggregate you will find it's quite a spectacle. There is no comparison in the Asia-Pacific region to the Kehpara (Black Coral) Island Marine Protected Area (MPA) spawning aggregation. Kehpara MPA is truly a natural wonder worthy of local and global protection to ensure it remains vibrant and sustained. The Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) in partnership with state fisheries office and conservation unit (recently restructured as the Division of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement) have completed another successful year of grouper spawning aggregation (SPAG) monitoring. SPAG monitoring has been conducted since 2001 at Kehpara during months of March and April to gauge the population trend of three locally and regionally important grouper species. During these two months, each of the three grouper species is monitored over three days. The three species are the Brown-marbled grouper (*Epinephelus fuscoguttatus*), Camouflage grouper (*Epinephelus polyphkadion*), and Squartail coral grouper (*Plectropomus areolatus*).

"SPAG site management is one of the key actions Pohnpei needs to focus on in order to maintain a healthy fishery", according to the majority of fishermen interviewed during a perception survey conducted by Dr. Kevin Rhodes, CSP and the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture. This year during the month of March and April, the Pohnpei monitoring team successfully



Monitoring team member Kesdy-Ray Ladore executing grouper count.

completed another round of SPAG data collection on the beautiful reefs of Kehpara. The reefs surrounding Black Coral Island, south west of Pohnpei, is home to incredible biodiversity of marine life including a spawning ground for various fish species that share the same reef patch. Collected data are currently being managed and analyzed by the CSP. This database is reviewed and shared with marine biologists around the globe to help guide CSP and partners with MPA management effectiveness. Collected data are also very important for management decisions for Kehpara Marine Sanctuary. The CSP has been partnering with Dr. Rhodes and other international scientists from Guam, Australia, Belize and the US Virgin Islands to conduct his annual research on the aggregating grouper species. Those findings help provide support the SPAG monitoring program and give CSP and the state the scientific information needed for best practices for management and conservation. CSP and partners have gained a wealth of information on the groupers and Kehpara SPAG site from all the successful monitoring efforts thus far. We will continue this program with hopes to expand and explore other remaining SPAG sites on Pohnpei. The Kehpara MPA is truly a treasure for ages. Your support will help ensure it remains a bank for generations providing groupers for life.



In partnership with Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) has increased efforts to control and eradicate the invasion of False Sakau known to be present on 121 known sites around the island. Since its Introduction in 2000 this plant has spread island wide rapidly by unsuspecting sakau farmers even as far and deep into the interior forest thinking the plant to be similar to the local sakau plant. Intensive rounds of visits have been carried out to each of the sites for the past year to manage, reassess and apply herbicide control on all remaining active sites. Our champion staff BJ Obispo and expert consultant Mr. Konrad Englberger who leads this effort have logged hundreds of hours and miles driving and hiking to places like Dol Rakied, Nan Kepin Liwi and Nahnalaud which require at least four hours forest hike just to do their eradication mission on this wicked plant. All this effort has translated into positive. Our site assessments tell us we have 88% success rate of eradication. We will continue to keep close watch the 20 remaining known sites. Our effort to increase public awareness and project support has proven effective with new sites being reported by the community. Our remaining challenge is to determine if there are still any more False Sakau sites. It is our hope that the awareness efforts we carried out will help identify new sites we have not found.



Pictures of young Wicked False Sakau found in the Pohnpei Watershed Forest



MICRONESIA WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP RETREAT

Terrestrial Program Manager Mrs. Francisca Sohl Obispo has join one week meeting which was held in Tamuning, Guam started March 28, 2011. The purpose of the Micronesia Watershed Partnership Coordinator’s Retreat is to update each representative from each state to build a Micronesian Watershed Management Network by sharing the experiences of different watershed management and learned from each other regarding the watershed issues in the region.

The Watershed retreat was arranged and hosted by The Nature Conservancy-TNC Micronesia Program. There were four facilitators during the meeting or retreat, each has their own topic to share with the participants. Mr. Umiih Sengebau, Deputy Director of Conservation-TNC Micronesia Program, Mrs. Mae Adams, Partnership and Policy Advisor-TNC Micronesia, Mike Aurelio, GIS Specialist-TNC –Micronesia Programs and Lukes Isechal, Researcher, Palau International Coral Reef Center. Resource people were Trina Leberer, Director, TNC-Micronesia Program and Justin Santos, Forester III, Guam Department of Agriculture. Participants were from Pohnpei, Kosrae, Yap and Palau.

It is a productive meeting with small group, sharing and learning at the same time. Mrs. Obispo has learned that across Micronesia, we all have common issues and challenges in watershed conservation efforts. Changes of life style and population growth causes changes to the environment as well. Road construction for better living, farming on the river banks, unsustainable tree cutting for house construction, wildlife burning, and other farming activities are some examples that Micronesia has in common or even other places in the world. Unsustainable human activities on land destroy the beauty of our island and even the spectacular sea life. The fact is we all have our own reasons to do what we can do for better live hood more often at the expense of nature. Our great ancestors lived in harmony with nature, but why have we abandoned the same practices? Until we have cut down all the trees, contaminated all rivers and destroyed our reefs we will realize that we cannot eat money.



Conservation group at the Guam Watershed Reserve.

AROUND THE OFFICE

ADVANCING COMMUNICATION AT SOCIETY

In connection with our biodiversity conservation mission at the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, communication tools and capacity has improved tremendously to stay on the cutting edge of technological advance to effectively support our biodiversity conservation work. From slow dial up connectivity with limited access we have successfully upgraded systems of communication with high speed ADSL global connectivity transforming our reach and capacity. This is made possible through generous support and partnership of the USDA-Rural Development program grant by the United States of America. With this generous support we are now able to provide latest computer operating systems on every work station along with premium ADSL fiber connection available to all staff at the Society to work efficiently and more effectively. Each staff at the Society now has direct access to e-mail service with increased capacity to network with counterparts and partners in the region and far beyond with ease. Interestingly this improvement will support launch and hosting of a GIS laboratory and Spatial Data Clearinghouse within our walls to act as biodiversity data bank for the FSM in support of conservation.

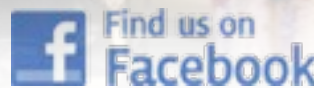
On March 11, 2011 Ms. Lori Dando Deputy Chief of Mission for the US Embassy based in Nett, Pohnpei and Mr. Gary Bloom USDA-Rural Development Program Area III (FSM) Director presented to CSP \$ 6,566.00 its project share commitment component that significantly supported our goal to improve support systems at the Society. Improvement has helped us cut cost of long distance through use of Skype and other popularly used communication tools that is web based. Already there is incredible value in technology advance to name one. The society provided a matching of \$7,100.00 in partnership with USDA-RD. Directly this newsletter is supported by an apple computer purchased partially by this grant.



Ms. Lori Dando and Mr. Gary Bloom presented support grant to CSP Director and Chairman Resio Moses Jr.



GIS laboratory and Spatial Data Clearinghouse inside CSP office for FSM conservation support.



Please renew your Membership today!

Help support the great work featured in this newsletter by sending us the form on the next page along with your support. Kalahngan!



CSP MEMBERSHIP FORM

Help Preserve Pohnpei's Natural Environment for a Better Tomorrow!

_____ I want to become a Member of the Conservation Society of Pohnpei.

_____ I want to renew my Annual Membership for the Conservation Society of Pohnpei.

Please complete the form and send to:

Conservation Society of Pohnpei

PO Box 2461

Kolonia, Pohnpei FM 96941

Individual Membership level:

_____ \$5 Student

_____ \$10 Local Pohnpeian living on Island

_____ \$25 Expatriate member living in Pohnpei

_____ \$25 Face book member (receive biweekly updates on CSP)

_____ \$50-\$1,000 per year: Contributing Member

Business Membership level:

_____ \$100-250 Oamp (Coconut Crab)

_____ \$251-500 Merer (Napoleon Wrasse)

_____ \$501-1,000 Serehd (Pohnpei Lori)

Member benefits:

All members are listed on CSP's website, electronic newsletters and Annual Report. Members paying annual dues of \$50 or more receive a CSP-t-shirt or hat.

Date: _____

How would you like your name to appear
in our newsletter and Annual Report?

Name: _____

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