

Trip Report
Palau-Guam Youth in Conservation/Watershed Learning Exchange in Guam
& Palau Renewable Energy Survey Report
December 12-16, 2012

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Executive Summary

A group of youth and their chaperones representing Palau Conservation Society (PCS), Ebiil Society and Koror State were in Guam for a “Youth in Conservation Learning Exchange” with Humatak Foundation’s youth group, the Umatac Coral Reef Ambassadors, and the Umatac community from December 12-16, 2012. The Palau youth group ranged from ages 16 to 20 years old. Along with the youth group were state conservation officers and conservation coordinators from Ngardmau, Ngchesar and Aimeliik who participated in the same exchange to observe the watershed restoration projects in Umatac at the Fu’a Watershed. Aside from the exchanges, one of PCS’s interns and Joyce K. Beouch met with UOG’s energy education task force and reported the results of the Palau Renewable Energy Survey. The watershed exchange was funded by Palau International Coral Reef Center, while the youth exchange was co-funded by The Nature Conservancy, UOG-Sea Grant, Palau Conservation Society, Humatak Foundation, Koror State Government and Ebiil Society. The UOG Energy Education Task Force report and meeting was funded by UOG- CIS Energy Grant.



Palau & Umatac Community at Umatac Village

The sites visited are as follows:

- University of Guam and Guam Community College
- Umatac Watershed Restoration Project Site (from La Sa Fu’a Watershed to Fouha Bay)
- Atlantis Submarine Expedition (patch reef in Guam Harbor)
- Fish Eye Marine Park (underwater observatory in Piti Bomb Hole)
- T. Stell Newman Visitor Center (interactive museum with Micronesia exhibits)
- Tour of Tumon (development and environmental impact)
- Village of Humatak (Umatac community)

The main objectives for the visit were to inspire the youth to become lifelong (and educated) stewards of conservation, educate the watershed group on watershed restoration techniques, and report Palau renewable energy survey results to the UOG Energy Education Task Force. Both youth and watershed groups visited sites from watershed protected areas to reefs. They even had the opportunity to meet with the Umatac community and exchange information regarding resource management of their

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respective communities that still rely on their natural resources for subsistence and cultural practices. Joyce K. Beouch and a PCS intern presented the results of Palau's renewable energy survey to the UOG Energy Education Task Force with Dr. Laura Biggs of UOG Sea Grant.

Youth Exchange

The Palau youth shared their conservation experiences from their respective affiliations:

- Palau Conservation Society (PCS) student interns presented a brief history of PCS and their experiences with various community conservation projects, national turtle monitoring, membership drives, and fundraising events.
- Koror State youth shared his experience with Koror State's Southern Lagoon management and enforcement, and how the management benefits him and his family by sharing his fishing expeditions with his family.
- Ebiil Society Juniors opened and closed the Palau presentations with traditional Palauan chants and shared their 8 years of learning with Ebiil Society starting as Ebiil campers and now as camp councilors. Their experiences included indigenous practices of resource use and conservation. They portrayed conservation as a way of life embedded within cultural beliefs and practices.



The Palau youth learned that Guam has lost much compared to Palau: Natural seeders such as birds, fish population and other ecologically important sites with development that has impacted the overall health of their terrestrial and marine resources. They learned that Guam's population is less reliant on their natural resources for livelihood than Palauans, and are challenged by a growing population of ethnic diversity, but by reinforcing their Chamorro culture they aim to protect their natural resources that hold cultural significance for the indigenous Chamorro.

The Palau youth participants and their chaperones made friends (and family) with the Umatac youth and community. The youth are eager to plan for the Guam youth visit to Palau to make sure that the Guam youth will have an opportunity to touch, see, feel, hear and taste what their conservation efforts in Palau helps to preserve. They were very intrigued and inspired by the UOG – Center for Island Sustainability program by experiencing the “fun” part of education, or technical application, and motivated by the programs that UOG has to offer. The youth were also inspired by Mr.



Christine Camacho of Guam Coastal Management Program shows the Palau group an erosion control project at Fu'a Watershed overlooking Fouha Bay

Yoichi Renguil, a Palauan in management position at UOG, and Ms. Leena Mueller, Palauan graduate student at UOG who is an intern with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS). One youth

was particularly inspired by Dr. Laura Biggs as a young female with a doctorate degree. The Palau youth were motivated to further their education in order to become effective conservation ambassadors and build capacity for Palau as a nation to ensure success in its conservation endeavors.

Watershed Exchange

The watershed group took notes on the outreach and watershed restoration techniques presented by Guam Coastal Management Program and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The participating conservation coordinators and officers were from three states in Palau that are members of the Belau Watershed Alliance (BWA, a.k.a. Babeldaob Watershed Alliance). These particular states, Aimeliik, Ngchesar and Ngardmau will implement watershed restoration projects in their respective states with similar techniques using sediment socks, re-vegetation and other storm water control methods to reduce sediment runoff and erosion. The states represented have identified sedimentation as a major threat to their water and marine resources: streams, mangroves, sea grass beds and coral reefs ecosystems. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) in Palau is a member of the BWA technical committee and the BWA members (communities and states) currently work with Palau's NRCS office for technical assistance regarding watershed management projects.



Palau Renewable Energy Survey Report

Joyce K. Beouch and Elbad Basilio, a PCS intern, presented the Palau survey results along with Dr. Laura Biggs who presented the Guam renewable energy survey results to the UOG Energy Education Task Force. The task force members reviewed the results and provided recommendations for renewable energy campaigns to involve partners and decision making bodies in the process.

Conclusion

Overall, both groups brought home a piece of Chamorro culture. They learned that Guam does have an indigenous community that still practice their Chamorro culture and the challenges they face in efforts to reinforce cultural values in a culturally diverse society. They realized that Guam has the means to restore ecologically critical sites and natural resources, but the Palau community still depends greatly on their natural resources for livelihood, which is why conservation is a priority in Palau. Both groups also agreed that because of our limited capacity and resources, it will be most effective for conservation to strengthen management and education in order for Palau to maintain resource abundance and biodiversity to ensure ecosystems health and functions in perpetuity. A partnership between the participating organizations and entities was established with a commitment to continue learning exchanges that would enhance community and youth conservation and resource management efforts. The participating groups are appreciative of The Nature Conservancy, UOG Sea Grant and Palau International Coral Reef Center for supporting the learning exchange.

Palau Conservation Society will turn in a report of the Palau Renewable Energy Survey results to the participating communities and state governments, and the Palau National Energy Committee with great appreciation to our UOG Sea Grant partners and CIS Energy Grant donor.