

Surfrider Foundation
Final Narrative Report to NOAA
Grant Award Number NA04NMF4630337 – CFDA 11.463 Salva Tres Palmas Campaign

The tasks and objectives of this grant are shown below, along with incremental progress made toward each over the course of the grant period, which started 1/1/2005 and ended 6/30/2006:

Objective 1 – Design a strategy to develop a management plan

a. Establish a Working Group with representatives of all stakeholders

The working group (Comité Timón) was formed, with seven members representing local and municipal government, fishers, scientists, users, local businesses, academia and local NGOs. The first working group meeting was held on Aug. 3, 2005. The Comité Timón (CT) met again on September 27th to shape the development of the management plan. The meetings included review, comment and finalization of the guiding policies and procedures, review of comments on the first version of the management plan and presentation of version 2, and the establishment of the Technical Advisory Committee (Grupo Asesor Técnico (GAT)). The GAT is providing technical oversight to the development of the management plan and will attend the next meeting.

The (Grupo Asesor Técnico (GAT)) was formed. The group includes experts with a range of backgrounds that range from legal expertise, planning, coral reef science, and education and outreach. In January 2006, the CT and GAT met at a workshop designed to continue the development of the management plan. The members of the GAT include:

- **Wilson Ramirez, Ph.D.** Department of Geology, UPR-M. Coral reefs, geological formations, sedimentation.
- **Eugene Piñero.** Fisherman/Distributor of fish. Resource user, regulation and conservation of fish in the Caribbean. Rincón resident.
- **Jose Vega M.B.A.,** Director of the Economic Development Center, UPR-M: Financing, community development, recreational and sport fishing.
- **Clarimar Diaz,** DRNA Planner. Handles plans, regulations.
- **Andrés Romeu, Ph.D.,** Consultant. Atmosphere; water quality and contamination, local and Federal regulations. Rincón resident and retailer.
- **Carlos Pacheco, B.S.,** Biologist. Marine Protected Areas, conservation of forests and marine areas (Guánica, Key Aurora), diving instructor, recreational fisherman.
- **Lcda. Ericka Fontenez,** Lawyer. Land and marine zoning and uses.
- **Lcda. Mildred Sotomayor,** DRNA, Lawyer. Land and marine zoning and uses.
- **Annette Blasini, M.A.,** Surfrider Foundation. Educator, community participation and collaboration, conservation, art. Rincón resident and retailer.
- **Sylvia Abbey,** Planning Board. Planning, zoning, plan approval.
- **Ken Lindeman Ph.D.,** Oceanographer. Coral reefs, community participation and collaboration, planning.



The group discussed the development of the management plan and the role the GAT will play in advising the process of developing a sound plan. The groups broke up into 4 subgroups to review the current draft of the management plan and discuss ways to improve the plan. The groups were organized by theme:



- * Biological Resources
- * Education
- * Planning
- * Economics & Recreation

The groups reconvened and provided valuable input into the plan.

A major emphasis was increased outreach and discussion of the RMTP in the community. Several strategies were discussed to increase community input including educational programs in the schools and providing more information for the community.

The GAT also recommended a strong linkage between this effort and the development of the Land Use Plan for Rincón, a matter thoroughly discussed and considered in previous meetings of the Steering Committee.

- b. Coordinate with the Comité del Plan de Manejo de la Reserva Marina Canal Luis Peña (Culebra Management Plan Working Group) to ensure the “lessons learned” from the development of this plan are incorporated into the development of the RMTP management plan.**

Dr. Pizzini is now largely driving the process to develop the management plan in Culebra and is facilitating input from the stakeholders involved in the management plan effort for the Reserva Marina Canal Luis Peña. In addition, he is coordinating a team of Worcester Polytechnic Institute students who interviewed a number of stakeholders in that island-municipality, and will be drafting a report on their findings by mid-May. This is the first step in developing a paper Dr. Pizzini will be writing on lessons learned from the Culebra case.

Dr. Pizzini’s involvement in Culebra ensures that we are tracking the Plan de Manejo for the Reserva Marina Canal Luis Peña.

- c. Carry out stakeholder meetings**

- i. Coordinate at least 6 bi-monthly meetings between all stakeholders during a period of one year to keep track of project progress.

The Rincón Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation held 18 monthly meetings to inform the community on the progress being made on the management plan and with outreach and education activities in the community. Dr. Pizzini was in attendance at more than six of these meetings to educate the community and get additional input on the process. In addition, two RMTP management plan orientation meetings were held. One meeting was a broad meeting open to the public at a monthly Surfrider Chapter meeting. The second was a “focus group” meeting with the Calvache Community Group. This neighborhood is in the hills of Rincón and represents our efforts to make the “Sea to Summit” connection a part of the management plan process. This community was extremely responsive to the RMTP management plan process and emphasized the need to include watershed communities in our efforts.

We continue to update the public on the progress of the management process at our regular monthly chapter meetings that are open to the public. Eighteen meetings have been held over the course of the grant period. In addition, we installed five RMTP interpretive signs to

continue our efforts to inform the community about the reserve and the management process. (See attached image of the sign.)

In May 2006, the Comité Timón began meeting with stakeholder groups to integrate their comments into the plan and to facilitate broad public participation.

Also, many Rincón locals attended a DRNA-NOAA-PR Special Communities meeting on coral reefs.

In addition, a reevaluation of the educational and outreach needs of the community has been conducted, and we have determined that holding public workshops is not the most effective mechanism to include community involvement. To be more effective, an educational plan has been developed to work with local schools as a means of getting the community involved, as well as a series of local group meetings to bring the information to the community members and ask for their input.

Through Surfrider Foundation's coordination, various community groups have volunteered their time and resources on the broader RMTP management plan effort, and over the past year, at least 400 volunteer hours have been spent on educational activities supporting reef protection. In addition, a school program on reef health and the RMTP was instituted to every 7th, 8th and 9th grader in Rincón.

ii. Three quarterly meetings will be carried out to inform the general public about the progress of the project.

See above.

iii. At the end of the project, the final draft of the co-management plan will be presented at a community meeting and will be made available to the general public for review and comments for a period of one month before the final submission to the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.

The plan is currently in draft version 4. The plan is being shared with small focus groups for feedback, and a broader review for the general public is being planned for this fall. Dr. Pizzini has met with DNER staff to review the process for approval and our plans are to submit the plan to DNER at the end of this year.

Objective 2 – Develop management plan

See a diagram of the process used to develop the management plan at the attachment.

The Comité Timón met approximately quarterly, and in April 2006, Dr. Pizzini presented Version 3 of the Management Plan for the Comité's review. Other members also gave presentations on their extensive outreach and education activities related to the Reserve in Rincón.

The plan has been developed with oversight from the Comité Timón, GAT, community and agency input the plan is being finalized this fall and will be subject to additional public review before being submitted to the DNER and Planning Board for approval.

Objective 3 – Develop water quality monitoring program

a. Coordinate and train volunteers in water quality testing procedures and protocols

A local water quality laboratory was established, and a coordinator was identified, local volunteers were trained and a monitoring program and a monitoring plan was established using our Blue

Water Task Force program for weekly testing of bacteria indicators at 12 beaches in and surrounding the marine reserve. The testing program continued for approximately 6 months and no high bacteria readings were found. The program has been temporarily suspended and we are in the process of trying to transfer the program to the local school.

b. Develop testing plan with locations and schedule

As stated above, activists were trained and a monitoring plan was established for weekly testing of bacteria indicators at 12 beaches in and surrounding the marine reserve. We began monitoring bacteria levels in Rincón in August 2005.

c. Work with UPR – Mayaguez microbiology lab to coordinate sampling

While unsuccessful in working with the UPR Mayaguez microbiology lab, we are working with Dr. Wilson Ramirez to establish a monitoring plan to measure the sources and impacts of sedimentation in the RMTP. This plan will be incorporated into the RMTP management plan and should act as a catalyst to fund and implement a monitoring effort.

d. Implement testing plan

Weekly testing results can be found at: <http://www.surfrider.org/BWTFoutput.asp> (select Rincón, Puerto Rico).

OTHER ACTIVITIES/PROGRESS

Progress for our NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant did not get fully underway until April 2005 for two primary reasons. First, because of political issues in Puerto Rico, we changed the contractor to lead the Reserva Marina Tres Palmas (RMTP) management plan development process. While this took some time, we are proud to have contracted this work with Dr. Manual Valdes Pizzini.

Dr. Pizzini brings a wealth of experience and insight to our efforts. He is a Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the Mayagüez Campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPRM), and the Associate Dean for Research at the College of Arts and Sciences at UPRM. He is also the former Director of the University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program, former Director of the Center for Applied Social Research at UPRM, and former Director of Field Programs for the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), where he coordinated research, education and outreach projects related to resource conservation, sustainable development and co-management of natural resources in the Caribbean. Dr. Pizzini holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Sociology from the University of Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, and a M.A. and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He has authored and co-authored many publications, including the recent book, Fishers at Work, Workers at Sea, with David Griffith.

The second reason for the slow start was the change in Commonwealth administration and the appointment of a new Secretary of Natural Resources. While this transition was in flux, our ability to coordinate with the Department of Natural Resources (DRNA) was inhibited. That said, once we began the development process things moved rapidly.

As part of its ongoing efforts to collaborate with other community groups and to increase awareness of the Reserva Marina Tres Palmas, Surfrider Rincón participated in the Comunidad Campo Alegre's monthly get-together in April 2005. Each month, members of Comunidad Campo Alegre get together in Calvache to discuss community needs, organize volunteer activities and foster a dynamic local community. During this neighborhood meeting, Surfrider made a presentation on the Reserva Marina Tres Palmas, the process to create a Management Plan and other outreach and education activities.

Surfrider volunteer Annette Blasini shared the stage with oceanographer Jean-Michel Cousteau at the 1st Beach Conservation Forum in San Juan. Annette, who plays a central role in the Salva Tres Palmas campaign, delivered a multimedia presentation to more than 200 attendees, outlining the campaign's history and explained the process that is commencing to create a Management Plan for the Reserve.

In order to raise awareness regarding the plight of coral reefs and their sensitivity to sedimentation, we developed a coral reef conservation superhero character and associated website called Coralino in coordination with DRNA and PR SeaGrant. Stickers of Coralino have been published and we constructed a bilingual website that describes the sensitivity of coral reefs to sedimentation, information on minimizing sedimentation at construction sites (a primary threat). See the new site at www.surfrider.org/coralino. In addition, the first Coralino Informa newsletter was created in both Spanish and English.

The Coralino site also includes a link to a PBS/Frontline World documentary film that we facilitated and is called Samurai Surfers. This video that tells the story of a surfer in Arecibo that helped stop an illegal dredging project that smothered coral reefs with sediment. This information will be found at: www.surfrider.org/coralino

In addition, we provided comments of the NOAA CZMP 312 assessment relative to our work on the RMTP.

Furthermore, a local Surfrider activist has been working with local school children to create a beautiful mosaic in Rincón to spread the message while also recycling tiles donated from local businesses. Each week the children come by and learn about the art of creating a mosaic, learn about the special Elkhorn reefs found in Rincón and help spread the word about protecting coral reefs.

For more information and ongoing updates about our work in Rincón, see www.surfrider.org/rincon.

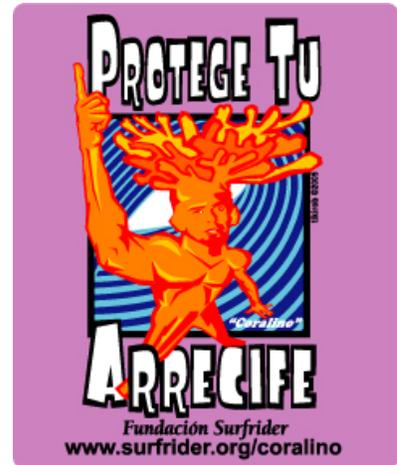
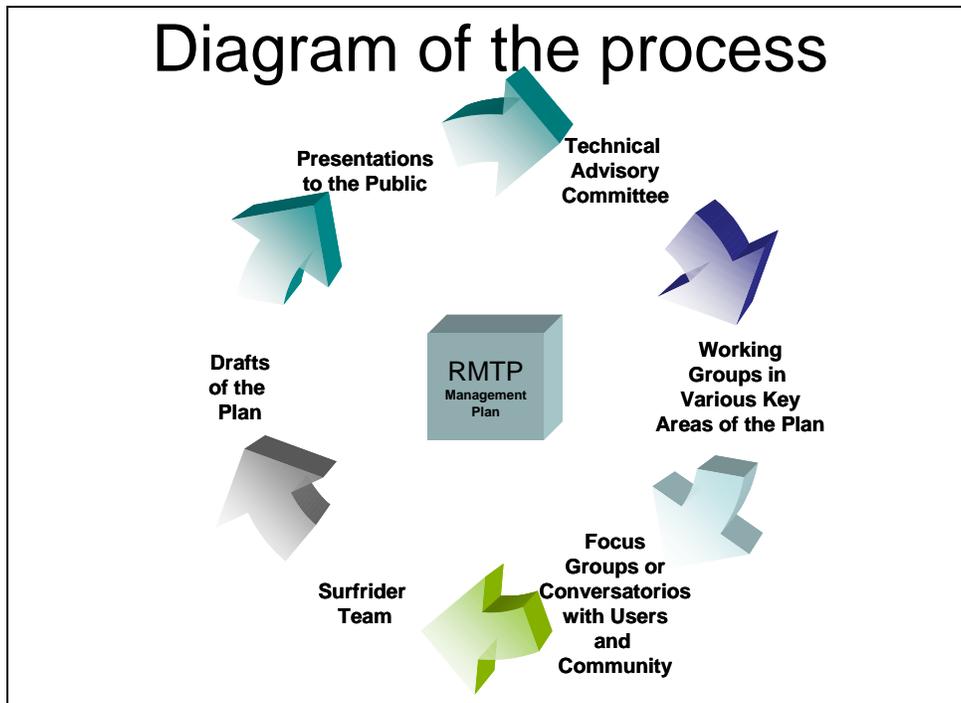


Diagram of the process



RESERVA MARINA TRES PALMAS

Designada bajo la Ley 17 - 8 de enero de 2004
"Ley de la Reserva Marina Tres Palmas de Rincón"

Actividades Permitidas Activities Allowed



Actividades Prohibidas Prohibited Activities



Una reserva marina es un área protegida con recursos excepcionales en la cual no se permite daño ni extracción alguna. Esta reserva marina contiene algunas de las comunidades de coral "Cuerno de Alerce" mejor conservadas en el Caribe.
A marine reserve is a protected area with exceptional resources that are protected and must not be removed or damaged. This marine reserve contains some of the healthiest Elkhorn Coral communities in the Caribbean.

Los corales se dañan al tocarlos, pararse en ellos, removerlos, anclarse y son sofocados por la basura y los sedimentos.
Corals are damaged by touching, standing, anchoring, and can be smothered by trash and sediment.

Por favor, nade horizontalmente al entrar al arrecife y mantenga una distancia razonable entre su cuerpo y los corales, para evitar tocarlos.
Please swim horizontal to the reef and maintain a safe distance to avoid contact with the corals.

Recoja su basura y mantenga la playa limpia para ayudar a proteger la vida marina.
Pick up your trash and keep the beach clean to help protect sea life.

Recursos Naturales Natural Resources



Para información o para reportar actividades ilegales, por favor llame al:
For information or to report unlawful activity, please call:
1787/882-5827 or 1787/724-5700

Esta Reserva Marina está al resguardo de la autoridad de Rincón y de las agencias reguladoras y operadoras.
This Marine Reserve is supported by the authority of Rincón and the relevant regulatory and operating agencies.

