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Monthly
Newsletter

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Hawai'i and American Samoa delegates visit Palau for Learning Exchange

A delegation of 27 people from Hawaii, American Samoa and the mainland US visited Palau from February 10 to 13, 2012, to learn about how Palau manages its natural and cultural resources. The 20 members of the learning exchange from Hawaii included representatives of The Nature Conservancy from Oahu, Maui and Hawaii Island and the



Director of Hawaii, Dept. of Land & Natural Resources. Other participants included two members from American Samoa, five Nature Conservancy representatives from the US mainland, and a film crew producing an educational program for middle school students. A similar delegation from Palau visited communities in Hawaii in July 2011 to learn about resource management in the face of rapid change and development.

Palau is recognized worldwide as a leader in marine con-

servation, and for its focus on merging traditional knowledge and modern governance to manage natural and cultural resources. The visitors learned from Palau's experience of integrating tradition, culture, science and governance to protect the lands and waters in which all life depends. The group learned about community-based approaches, enforcement, and about Palau's use of bul (moratorium), which is similar to kapu in Hawaiian culture. In Palau, the group met with Speaker Noah Idechong, the Council of Chiefs, and several different communities, as well as the Palau International Coral Reef Center and the Palau Conservation Society.

WWD 2012: Wetlands and Tourism

The Annual World Wetlands Day on February 2nd was celebrated this year by Palau with essay and drawing contests. The contests were between 7th and 8th grade students from Melekeok and Ngardmau Elementary Schools. (please see continuation on page 2)



1st place drawing by Imhery Casino

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Conseravation Area Management Planning Update

Palau has unique natural resources, such as geological features and special plants, animals and other organisms that are found no where else on earth. These unique plants and animals live in a wide variety of ecosystems that are highly vulnerable to human impacts, and therefore must be protected..

State governments have the responsibility to manage, protect and develop natural resources within their boundaries. Hence, states are encouraged, recognized and supported by the national government in their efforts to protect biodiversity in the Republic through the creation of protected areas.

To help ensure the success of protected areas, PCS is assisting states to develop management plans for their protected areas. These management plans are created through management planning teams, and through

community consultations. The management teams consist of appointees from the state government, state legislature and traditional leadership. The management plans are created with unofficial management plan criteria. The four states that have completed management plans for protected areas are Ngardmau, Aimeliik, Ngchesar and Ngaraard. PCS has ongoing management planning with Kayangel, Ngarchelong, Ngeremlengui and Koror states. All of the mentioned above states have become members of Palau's Protected Area Network (PAN), except Koror.

This nation wide PAN allows assistance from the national government to the states for protection of significant areas of biodiversity, significant habitats, and other valuable resources that are important to the future stability and health of Palau. It ties in with PCS' vision: Healthy ecosystems, Healthy people.

Forest & Coastal Bird Survey with Emphasis on Megapode in the Rock Islands

The Belau National Museum is conducting a Forest and Coastal Bird Survey in the Rock Islands. This survey, which began in November 2011, emphasizes the population count of the Palau Megapode. The data from this survey will be used by Koror State for the management of the Rock Island Southern Lagoon, and will be part of the new five year management plan.

The Palau Conservation Society and the Belau National Museum signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the survey this month. The survey is also in partnership with Birdlife International.

continuation from page 1: WWD 2012...

The theme for the essay contest was the international WWD theme "Wetlands & Tourism". The students wrote essays about wetlands in Palau with tourism activities, such as the Eco-Theme Park of Ngardmau state, which features tourism activities such as a zip-line, monorail and nature hike. The drawing contest also featured wetlands with tourism attractions.

Congratulations to Shanaia O. Towai, from the 7th grade of Ngardmau Elementary School, for winning



1st place in the essay contest. Congratulations to Imhery Casino, from Melekeok Elementary School, for winning 1st place in the drawing contest.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week. was celebrated from January 29 to February 4, 2012. The theme this year was Faith, Academic & Service. On February 1, Elbuchel Sadang, Executive Director of PCS, was invited as keynote speaker to address the students on the theme. On the same day, there was a Science Fair with demonstration projects from students. Volunteers judges from PCS were Heather Ketebengang, Yalap P. Yalap, Toni Soalablai and Henaro Antonio. Toni and Henaro are Palau High School Career Practicum Senior students based in PCS.

Melekeok Land Use Planning

Members of the Melekeok Planning Commission conducted two community meetings on February 21 and 23, 2012. The first meeting was in Melekeok state, and the second meeting was held in the Meeting Hall of the Palau Community College, to accommodate people of Melekeok living in Koror.

Both meetings were conducted to update the progress of the Melekeok Land Use Plan formulated by the members of the commission. Updates included issues of designation of public land for urban housing development, commercial areas, zoning, agriculture areas, educational institution, conservation areas and parks and recreation.

Members of the community and the leadership were tasked with defining the vision of the land use plan.. The community is invited to submit their vision for the land use plan. Entries can be dropped off to Umai Basilius at PCS.



Community meeting in Melekeok state.

Status of Fish Update with Chiefs

By request from the Council of Chiefs of Palau, PCS organized a meeting for them on update of status of fish stock.. Steven Victor of The Nature Conservancy and Dr. Yimnang Golbuu each made presentations.

Victor, in his presentation, explained why is there a need to focus attention on the management of Palau's fisheries. He further explained that, although there is western management approach, there are still challenges. The traditional Palauan practice of management along with the current marine conservation approach works hand in hand together. As fish stock continues to decline, the traditional chiefs and states are the rightful owners of the resources and there has to be the balance between the two systems. Victor further encouraged the chiefs that collaboration and cooperation between the elected and traditional leadership and management will work best.

Dr. Golbuu, for his part, emphasized the importance of fishes in the ecosystem. Some fish are herbivores, so they maintain the population of algae and seagrass, and some maintain the health of the coral reefs. Aside from being a source of food, Dr. Golbuu said fishes are also important for tourism. The population of fish should be maintained at a level where tourists can see them and be happy and at the same time we can maintain a sustainable livelihood. Dr. Golbuu further added that researches from 2009 indicated fish decline. Later, with the areas that are protected or controlled, fish stock is increasing.

The Council of Chiefs request for regular meetings for updates on environmental issues from Palau Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy and the Palau International Coral Reef Center.

Tublai Illilau Moves On

After nearly 5 years with PCS, Tublai Illilau is leaving her position. She is starting a new position as student counselor with the Palau Community College at the Learning Resource Center. We enjoyed her tenure here, and appreciate having had the opportunity to have worked with Tublai. Thank you for the support and good luck on starting a new phase of your career.

Membership & Renewable Form

Our Mission
The mission of the Palau Conservation Society is to work with the community to preserve the nation's unique natural environment and perpetuate its conservation ethic for the economic and social benefit of present and future generations of Palauans and for the enjoyment and education of all.

Our Vision
Healthy Islands
Healthy Communities

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Yes! I want to help Palau grow wisely in the years ahead.

I want to renew as a new member_____

I am renewing my membership_____

Annual membership fee:

\$5 Student Member \$10 Regular Member \$25 Family Member

Name:_____

Date:_____

Organization:_____

Address:_____

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Please fill out this form and send to:

Palau Conservation Society

P.O. Box 1811

Koror, Palau 96940

Contacts: Tel: (680) 488-3993/4716, Fax: (680) 488-3990

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