

PACIFIC INVASIVES LEARNING NETWORK

SOUNDBITES | March 2014

Pacific Invasives Learning Network

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The monthly electronic newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) — reporting on invasive news from PILN teams and the Pacific Invasives Partnership. Past issues are available online: http://www.sprep.org/piln

WELCOME TO YOUR PILN SOUNDBITES for March.

Another busy month with planning and meetings. The Pacific Islands Foresters Meeting was held in Pagopago, American Samoa saw a good demonstration by the American Samoan Invasive Species Team of the invasive species work that has been led by the American Samoa National Park Service and the American Samoa Community College. The hillside of the steep terrain of Pagopago Harbour was littered with dead tamaligi (*Albizia chinensis*) - a highly invasive tree that



threatens the native forests of American Samoa. Samoa also undertook a nationwide invasive species consultation with communities to highlight the importance of community engagement and participation in protecting the island from invasive species, as part of the GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project.

Just a reminder that this year is the International Year of Small Island Developing States and also the Pacific Year of Natural Solutions - so let's work together to keep our islands free from invasive species.

PILN TEAMS AND COUNTRY UPDATES

American Samoa

Pacific Islands Forestry Committee meeting in Pago

Members of the American Samoa Invasive Species Team were heavily engaged in the Pacific Islands Forestery Committee meeting that was held from 4-8th March. The meeting participants were made up of United States affiliated islands in the Pacific (Palau, FSM, Guam, CMNI, Marshall Islands, American Samoa and Hawaii). Many of the participants are also members of national invasive species taskforce. The meeting focused on a number of priority issues including forest health, wildland fires, sustainability, climate change and water. Invasive species was a key component of the meetings and American Samoa presented a number of invasive species projects that they are working on, including a project relating to mapping invasive species in the Territory. Particular species of focus were the rubber tree (*Castilla elastica*) and the red-bead tree (*Adenanthera pavonina*). Another project focused on weed control of *Merremia*. Invasive plant partnership was the focus of the presentation by Tavita Togia (ASIST Coordinator) from the National Park Service - working with chiefs and communities to replant native trees following the removal of invasive species.

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

A presentation by Victor Deleon at the Pacific Islands Forestry Committee meeting held recently in Pago highlighted conservation effort put in by his team to manage invasives. Public awareness campaigns including school visits, developing of resources such as posters were held. A team was active in the removal of target invasive species including the *Mucuna* bean, which is linked to a health hazard for many that come in contact with this plant. The release of biocontrol was also a component. Replanting of native vegetation with *Pandanus* and *Barringtonia* was also carried out. Concerns for CNMi is the presence of the tiger moth that is impacting on bananas.

Fiji A myna problem



The Outrigger on the Lagoon Resort, located on the beautiful Coral Coast of Fiji, have been busy catching invasive mynas that are often pestering diners in their outdoor dining areas. Nick and Jane Hall from Australia, who are also members of the Canberra Indian Myna Action Group were holidaying at the Outrigger and noted the myna problem With their efforts and those of the staff of the Outrigger Resort, traps were made and lured by hot chips, the mynas became an easy picking. In February, 661 mynas were trapped and March saw 1,103 mynas caught and disposed off humanely. For more information on this please contact Outrigger Resort (pr@outriggerfiji.com.fj).

Guam

The Pacific Daily News in Guam has been busy reporting on invasive species. In fact five items were published recently.

Threat: capacity, funding to fight invasive species must be developed



Over the years, our island's ecology has been ravaged by many invasive species. There are no natural predators for them, which allows them to gain a foothold and spread. The most well-known case is the brown tree snake. The reptile has decimated the local bird population. In addition to the harm caused to native species, these snakes have been responsible for thousands of power outages since their introduction.

Two recent additions to Guam's growing invasive species list are causing havoc. The coconut rhinoceros beetle has been devastating Guam's palm trees. Most of the coconut trees at Ypao Beach, in the island's main tourism district, were cut down because of beetle damage. The National Park Service is removing about 100 coconut trees at the Asan Beach Park. Guam also is seeing an increasing infestation of the little fire ant. In Hawaii, there have been reports of little fire ant bites causing blindness in cats and dogs. They also threaten native species, such as geckos, lizards

and insects. It's clear that our government and the community, as a whole, must do more to fight the spread of invasive species.

The local government has failed to fully implement a law, passed more than two years ago, that's meant to bolster the island's efforts to address invasive species. Public Law 31-43 established the Guam Invasive Species Council, authorized a biosecurity division at the Department of Agriculture and identified funding, through a fee, meant to combat the threat of invasive species. The council meets but the government has never established the biosecurity division and still hasn't implemented the fee, which would generate local matching money for federal funds. It would result in up to \$1.8 million in annual funding for fighting invasive species on the island.

The government must move with urgency to fully implement the law. It also must also establish a strategic biosecurity and invasive species management plan for the island that addresses prevention, inspection, mitigation and eradication. GovGuam struggles with its inspection and mitigation efforts and there is little to no capacity locally to address eradicating invasive species.

The spread of invasive species is one of the greatest threats to the island's environment, economy, public health and way of life. Our island urgently needs a biosecurity plan and our government must have the capacity and funding to combat invasive species.

Working to ensure federal resources



An opinion piece by Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam Delegate to the US House of Representatives

Several invasive species have caused significant harm to Guam's environment, and they threaten our way of life. Brown tree snakes have decimated our bird population, fire ants threaten our animals and ecosystems, and rhino beetles threaten the coconut trees that are a source of shade and sustenance. In the face of climate change, and the threat that the next typhoon or shipment will introduce new invasive species to our island, we must be innovative in finding new ways to protect our island from the harmful effects of these species. *Read more on Guam Pacific Daily News*.

Be aware of impact of invasive species



Opinion piece by Prof. Ross Miller - member of the Guam Invasive Species Council and Professor of Entomology at the University of Guam

Invasive species have impacted Guam since its formation, and especially since the arrival of humans. Most of us don't realize their impact, or even that they are present because we have grown up with them, or otherwise become accustomed to them to such an extent that we consider them part of the "natural" environment.

It is not until some drastic action occurs, such as the removal of coconut palms on some of Guam's most visible and beautiful beaches, that their effects are noticed. The little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle and Asian cycad scale are the three most recent and most prominent invasive species to arrive on Guam, rivalling the brown tree snake in their impact on the island's environment. But they are not the only biotic invaders to leave their mark on Guam, and

will not be the last.

It is imperative that residents, policymakers, the military and tourists be aware of the impact that invasive species can have on the fragile environments of islands in Micronesia. For Guam residents, this means being careful not to transfer little fire ants or other insects from one place to other, and obeying import restrictions on plants and food when returning from off island. For policymakers it means bestowing higher priority on preserving and protecting Guam's natural environment while still allowing economic development to occur. For the military this means acting as good stewards of those portions of Guam's natural environment for which they have assumed responsibility. For tourists, it means following laws that prohibit importation of food, plants and animals without proper permits.

I am convinced that, somewhere in the heart of almost every Guam resident, there lies a hidden and visceral connection to Guam's natural resources and an appreciation of its beauty. I think it is time for this latent conservation ethic, in the best tradition of the island's environmentally conscious ancestors, to manifest itself. We need to better manage the resources of this singular island, which has been entrusted to our care during this period of its history.

Island must fully execute Public Law 31-43



Opinion piece by Christopher Duenas, Senator in the 32nd Guam Legislature

The unimpeded spread of invasive species is one of the greatest threats to Guam's economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of our people. This issue, unchecked, will cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the distribution of native forests and the spread of disease. That is why, over two years ago, Sen. Aline Yamashita and I introduced what is now Public Law 31-43. This law proactively addresses the identification, mediation and eradication of invasive species on Guam. The law does accomplishes three things:

- Establishes the Guam Invasive Species Council;
- Authorizes the establishment of the Department of Agriculture Biosecurity Division; and
- Funds resources to effectively combat the threat of invasive species.

Our island needs an organization that is responsible and accountable for the identification, mitigation and eradication of invasive species across agencies. This is why we have established the Invasive Species Council.

Partnership, community involvement are key



Opinion piece penned by Jim Richardson, Superintendent of the War in the Pacific National Historical Park

The spread of invasive species is recognized as one of the major factors contributing to ecosystem change and instability throughout the world. Invasive plants and animals have the ability to displace or eradicate native species, damage infrastructure, threaten human livelihoods, and irreparably change the iconic landscapes of our national parks. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Guam, which witnessed the extinction of native bird species caused by the invasive brown tree snake. Now, we face new invasive species challenges.

First discovered on Guam in 2007, the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle has devastated coconut trees across the island. Presenting an even more dangerous threat to not only Guam's ecosystem but public health, the little fire ant was discovered in 2011. Unfortunately, both of these invasive species prove very challenging to eradicate.

What is the National Park Service doing about invasive species? In consultation with experts at local and national levels, we are considering several options to eradicate the beetle and fire ant from the park.

Thanks to the efforts of the Guam Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Eradication Team, efforts to control the beetles include trapping adults and removing breeding sites of young larvae. Pesticides, viruses and fungus to kill the beetles have shown variable success. Regretfully, removal of damaged coconut trees is required to mitigate the ongoing beetle

infestation, improve the survival rate of healthy trees, and ensure public safety in high-use areas of the park.

Steps to remove the fire ants involve the application of special pesticides at the tree and ground levels, as well as cutting and burning infested trees in place. We also decided to close a high-traffic area at Asan Beach where fire ants are present. This closure was implemented to reduce the health risk to the public and to reduce the possibility of spreading fire ants to other areas of the island. [Read more here]

Hawaii

Boa constrictor run over in Hawaii

A boa constrictor was run over on Hawaii's Pali Highway. There are no native snakes to Hawaii and snakes are prohibited from being brought to the State. No evidence of other snakes was found so hopefully this was just an isolated case. It illustrates the need for sound screening improvements at the border to prevent the import of harmful non-native species. [Source: NCEIS]

C-GAPS meet

The Coordinating group for Alien Pest Species held their meeting on the 18th March to discuss a range of issues including response to the coconut rhinoceros beetle and the little fire ants. Updates from other invasive species committees were also made. For more information contact Christy Martin (christym@rocketmail.com)

2nd Annual Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council kicked off Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week with a proclamation and awards ceremony at the Capitol Auditorium on March 3. The event featured informational booths displaying species that endanger Hawaii's native flora and fauna. The award ceremony recognized distinguished members of the community that have dedicated their time and expertise to combat invasive species problems. Masako Cordray from Maui Country received the Greatest Hit of 2013 award for her effort in the battle against little fire ant. Masako worked with the Maui Invasive Species Committee to create an inspiration video about the little fire ant as a call to action to stop its spread. [Source: J. Kalani English - Hawaii State Senate 7th District - Newsletter]

Kosrae [source: Jason Jack, Leonard Sigrah, Jacob Sanney]

March was filled with Invasive Species Actions on the island of Kosrae. The challenge with the invasive whitefly continues.

- Awareness: local agencies including the Kosrae Conservation & Safety Organization (KCSO), the Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority (KIRMA), and DREA teamed up to carry out school visits to all Kosrae Elementary Schools, targeting grades 7 and 8. The aim of the visits was to demonstrate control methods for the whitefly (*Aleurotrachelus trachoides*). In addition, the Team also promoted the use of enclosed greenhouses and containers, as a preventive measure for the whitefly.
- Field combat: the team was also joined by the students to remove Honolulu rose (*Clerodendrum chinense*) found on the island.









Fig. 1. Greenhouse to protect crops from the whitefly. Fig. 2. Luke Sanney working with students on the whitefly. Fig. 3. A student with a Honolulu rose. Fig. 4. Getting rid of the Honolulu rose. Pics by Norman Jun.

Palau

Yalap and Joel participated in the Education Awareness Week 10-17 March, giving a presentation on invasive species threats to wetlands to students from several local elementary schools.

Samoa consult communities on invasive species

A team from the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has been busy throughout February and March holding community consultations throughout Savaii and Upolu Islands. The consultation process provided the opportunity for the officials to highlight some serious invasive species already present in the country and efforts to manage their impacts. For more information contact ACEO Faleafaga Toni Tipamaa (toni.tipamaa@mnre.gov.ws).

PACIFIC INVASIVES PARTNERSHIP (PIP) - REGIONAL NEWS

Pacific Invasives Partnership Annual Planning Meeting

The Pacific Invasives Partnership held their annual planning meeting in Apia, Samoa from 24-28 February, 2014. The meeting brought together 11 of the 30 or so members to discuss progress made in 2013-2014 and to develop a work-plan for 2014-2015. Discussions included the following topics:

- <u>GEF-6:</u> As agreed and endorsed by the SPREP members in their 2013 annual meeting, PIP discussed the development of the Project Identification Form (a GEF process) and agreed on developing a regional framework that will strengthen support to Pacific Island countries.
- <u>3rd SIDS Meeting:</u> A presentation by SPREP's main focal point for the SIDS meeting (Sefa Nawadra) led to discussions on what PIP could realistically do to contribute and to raise the profile on biosecurity and invasive species management in the Pacific at this important event. The SIDS meeting will be held in Samoa from 2-6 September and will focus on building lasting partnerships for small island developing states.
- <u>Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting:</u> PIP members noted the successful efforts reflected on the past two communiqués from the Leaders meeting (2012 Cook Islands and 2013 Marshall Islands) and agreed that the upcoming Leaders meeting in Palau presents another opportunity to further promote the invasive species cause. In particular the leadership shown by Palau President Remengesau on biosecurity and invasive species management. PIP members agreed on a series of actions that will contribute to raising the profile and hopefully the commitment of all to invasive species management.
- World Parks Congress: Members agreed to identify opportunities within the programme to support the inclusion of invasive species. The World Parks Congress will be held in Sydney in November.
- Work Plan 2014-2015: The workplan for 2014-2015 was agreed to by the members with specific activities being led by a PIP member.
- GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project Update: An update was provided by the GEF-PAS Coordinator (Gianluca Serra) on progress made for this project. Ten countries are participating and all are in various stages of implementations. An independent mid-term review will be carried out shortly for the 10 participating countries focusing on progress made. The GEF-PAS Invsive Species project will end in 2016, and it is anticipated that most of the project activities will conclude by then, with the exceptions of a few that will be ongoing (e.g. biocontrol).
- Mt Vaea Restoration Brief: The Parks and Reserves team from the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Talie Foliga and Josef Pisi) gave a presentation on the invasive species work that they are undertaking for the Mt Vaea Reserve. An ambitious effort to remove invasive trees and to restore the forests to native species.

Present at the meeting included SPREP (coordinator), SPC (chair), BirdLife International (Pacific Programme), Island Conservation, US National Invasive Species Council, Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council, Hawaii AntLab, Pacific Invasives Initiative, Pacific Invasives Learning Network, United Nations Environment Programme, Landcare Research New Zealand. Fore more information on the Pacific Invasives Partnership - feel free to contact Josua Wainiqolo (PIP Chair - josuaw@spc.int) or David Moverley (davidm@sprep.org).

Little Fire Ant bait

A new bait produce (SIESTA) is now available to fight the little fire ant (*Wassmania auropunctata*). According to Dr Cas Vanderwoude of the Hawaii AntLab - "My colleagues at CTAHR (Dr Arnold Hara and Susan Cabral) have tested Siesta and they tell me it is much more rain-fast than other products. So, if it rains after applying Siesta, it will still be attractive after getting wet. The active ingredient (metaflumizone) is very similar to Provaunt in its mode of action and belongs to the same group of chemicals. Metaflumizone is a very safe pesticide and there is actually no personal protective equipment like gloves, long pants or socks and shoes needed when you are using it." Contact Dr Cas Vanderwoude should you need more information. [Source: <u>Cas Vanderwoude</u>]

Pacific Invasives Initiative and Island Conservation sign MoU

PII and Island Conservation (IC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) last January. The MOU reflects PII and IC's commitment to working together on the issue of invasive species in the Pacific island region. PII and Island Conservation share a common concern for the effective prevention, eradication or control of invasive species that pose a threat to Pacific islands ecosystems. Both organisations will therefore seek opportunities to increase resources and expertise available to Pacific Islands Countries and Territories to enhance their capacity to deal effectively with invasive species problems. Both organisations recognise that The Guidelines for invasive species management in the Pacific: a Pacific strategy for managing pests, weeds and other invasive species provide a robust framework for the development of national and regional invasive species programmes.

From Aliens-List:

Looking for monkey control

Silvia R. Ziller (Horus Institute for Environmental Conservation and Development) is looking for control options on the invasive *Callithrix tamarins*, that is threatening the population of lion tamarins and small primates along the Atlantic coast of Brazil. If you can help please contact Silvia on sziller@institutohorus.org.br

New website for the Pacific Invasives Initiative

PII has a new website: http://www.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/ which is now live. We hope that this website will be more user-friendly and clearly communicate the type of support PII provides to Pacific agencies. It has information on: our different training courses; our partners and the projects we have assisted them with; our newsletter; and best practice resources. There has also been a change in URL for the Resource Kit for Rodent & Cat Eradications. The new URL is: http://rce.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/

Changes to note

PII Main website URL http://www.issg.org/cii/PII is no longer valid. Bookmark the new URL http://www.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/ Resource Kit for Rodents & Cats this URL: http://www.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/ is no longer valid. Bookmark the new URL: http://rce.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/

VACANCY AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

CBD - capacity-building workshop for small island developing states for targe 9 (invasive species)

CBD Secretariat is calling for nomination of up to 2 representatives from eligible countries to attend the capacity-building workshop for SIDS, planned for the 14-15 June, 2014 in Montreal, Canada. Deadline for submission is 30 April, 2014. Please contact your CBD Focal Point for more information.

Program Manager (East Maui Watershed Partnership)

Looking to fill this post. Please contact Shannon Paapanene (admin@eastmauiwatershed.org) for further information.

2014 DICE MSc Scholarship

The Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) at the University of Kent is pleased to announce the launch of the 2014 DICE MSc Scholarship scheme. The successful applicant will receive a fully funded studentship on one of our taught Masters in our Conservation Science and Management programme. For more information contact Shelley Malekia (s.malekia@kent.ac.uk). Applications closes 13th April, 2014.

The Rapid Response Facility (RRF)

Invites small grant applications for UNESCO inscribed natural World Heritage sites, and tentative sites facing emergency threats to their biodiversity. The RRF is a unique small grant programme jointly operated by Fauna & Flora International and UNESCO World Heritage Centre. With a target processing time for grant applications of just 8 working days, the RRF provides rapid support to enable conservation practitioners to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies in some of the world's most important sites for biodiversity. For more information visit – www.rapid-response.org

Craig S. Harrison Conservation Grants - Pacific Seabird Group

The objective of the Conservation Fund is to advance the conservation of seabirds by providing funds or supplies to individuals from developing countries as well as those from elsewhere working in those developing countries primarily in or bordering the Pacific Ocean, (1) for conservation and restoration activities that benefit seabirds in the Pacific Ocean; and (2) to help develop within-country seabird expertise in developing countries within or bordering the Pacific Ocean. Send an email to Verena Gill (verena.gill@gmail.com) and Craig Harrison (charrison@hunton.com), briefly explaining what you want to propose and where you want to do the work. That way, you can get a rapid determination from them of whether your proposal is eligible for consideration for funding. If they determine that your study is eligible, then fill out and send the application form, the proposal/budget, and the letter of reference, as described below, to Verena Gill and Craig Harrison. Please note that applications/proposals may be submitted at any time—there is no fixed deadline for submission. All applications/proposals will be evaluated whenever they are submitted.

SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme)

SPREP has a number of vacancies and tender opportunities available. Please check out the SPREP's Job Vacancies page for further information. http://www.sprep.org/Human-Resources/Job-Vacancy/

- Director, Biodiversity & Ecosystem Management Division (applications by 25 April, 2014)
- Finance and Administration Advisor (applications by 25 April, 2014)
- SPREP Solid Waste Management Expert for permanent residents of FSM (applications by 11 April, 2014)

SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

SPC has vacancies and consultancy opportunities. Please check out the SPC's website for further information. www.spc.int/job.html - or contact Christine Croombes (recruit@spc.int).

INVASIVE NEWS GLOBAL

New Guinea flatwork found in France

A flatworm listed in the 100 worst invasive species in the world has turned up in Caen, France. The flatworm was found in a hot-house. [source: Science Daily]

Slipper shells invasion

Fishermen in Mont Saint-Michel Bay in France are finding their nets weighed down by an invasive snail that was introduced from the Atlantic coast. The snail -known as the Atlantic slipper snail, or slipper limpet - behaves like many other invasive species, competing with native fauna for food and space, and altering the ecosystems through depositing pseudo-faeces (a product of their filtering). How it was introduced was probably through aquaculture (introduction of *Crassostrea virginica* from the States) or via ship's hull and ballast water. For more information on this species - see the <u>Global Invasive Species Database</u> (http://www.issg.org/database/species/ecology.asp?si=600).

Dingo poisoning should stop to protect Aussie mammals



Poisoning of dingoes has negative effect on small native mammals of Australia, including marsupial mice, bandicoots and native rodents. A study by Colman and colleagues showed that as dingoes number dwindles, the activity of foxes that prey on small mammals increases. Kangaroos and wallabies increases their grazing, which reduces the density of the understorey vegetation where mammals live, leaving them vulnerable to predators. [Source: Science Daily].

Feral swines are just bad news



Feral pigs are destructive species. They prey on livestock and compete with native wildlife. They contribute to poor water quality when they root, defecate and urinate in rivers, streams and lakes. They cause damage to agriculture, harm native plants and species like turtles, ground-nesting birds and they carry more than 30 diseases transmissible to people, pets, livestock and wildlife. And they cause billions of dollars damage every year. But there's no easy way to get rid of them. In Missouri (US) an ambitious five-year eradication programme have just started using helicopters, corral traps and human-triggered drop nets. Using baits with toxins is a new method

that they are currently exploring based on its successful use in Australia. This provides some hope especially in large areas. However, there is still a lot more research to be done before it can be approved for use.

INVASIVE SPECIES PUBLICATIONS

The National Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan for the Republic of Mauritius. 2009-2018.

Colman, NJ, Gordon, CE, Crowther, MS & Letnic, M. 2014. Lethal control of an apex predator has unintended cascading effects on forest mammal assemblages. *Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences.* Vol. 281 (1782):

Pacific Invasives Initiative March Newsletter is now available for your viewing pleasure. Some of the items include: PII signs MoU with Island Conservation; Yellow Crazy Ants | FSM Invasive Species Activities | Cook Islands Project Becomes a Reality | Pacific Ant Prevention Programme | and more. Contact PII for further information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2014	Event	Participating Partner
March		

1 Mar	International Women's Day	
3-8 Mar	US National Invasive Species Awareness Week	US NISC, Hawaii Invasive Species Councils
21 Mar	International Day of Forests	
22 Mar	World Water Day	
April		
22 Apr	Earth Day	
May		
11-12 May	World Migratory Bird Day	
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity: Island Biodiversity	
24 May	World Fish Migration Day: Connecting Fish, Rivers, People	
June		
5 Jun.	World Environment Day	SPREP
8 Jun.	World Oceans Day	SPREP
25 Jun.	Day of the Seafarer	SPC
August		
12 Aug.	International Youth Day	SPREP
September		
1-6 Sep.	World Water Week	SPC
20 Sep.	International Coastal Cleanup Day	
23-27 Sep.	World Maritime Day: IMO Conventions: Effective implementation	SPREP, IMO

Disclaimer: Articles contained within this or other PILN Soundbites do not necessarily reflect the views of PILN teams, SPREP or the Pacific Invasives Partnership. Contact the PILN Coordinator for further information (posas@sprep.org).