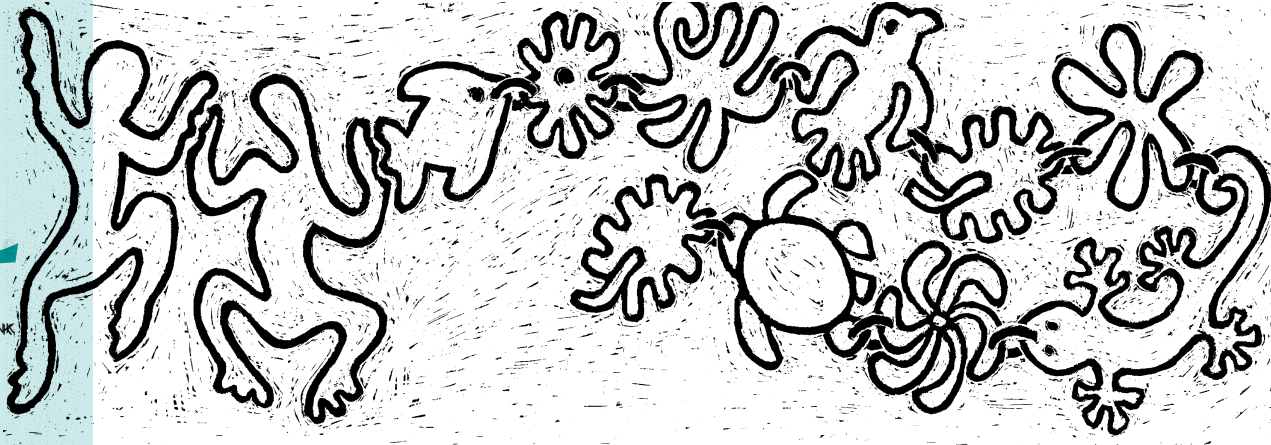


CALL

CONSERVATION AREA LIVE LINK



Formerly called CASOLINK

A newsletter for Conservation Areas in the Pacific

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SPREP

South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Jaluit Atoll Conservation Area (CA) moves ahead with the full support of the communities

John Bungitak *CASO Jaluit Atoll*



Jaluit Atoll CA in the Marshall Islands is the newest Conservation Area Project (CAP) to join the SPBCP family. It kicked off its activities at the beginning of the first quarter 2000 on a positive note. The communities have shown their support for the project in a big way as John Bungitak explains in the following article.

At the invitation of the Jaluit Atoll Local Council, Jorelik Tibon, General Manager of the Marshall Islands Environment Protection Agency (the lead agency) and I went to Jaluit Atoll on 11 February 2000. The purpose of this trip was to brief the council about the SPBCP-supported conservation area project for the atoll.

We departed Majuro International Airport for the 45-minute plane journey to Jaluit Atoll where we were met at the airport and transported to our hotel.

Council meeting

The meeting with the council was scheduled for the next day, Saturday, to allow for the arrival of members of the council from the different communities within the atoll.

The meeting took place at the Catholic Mission school building. It commenced late because we were invited to attend a birthday party. As is the custom of the place, all the people on the island were invited to share the food that the birthday person's family had prepared for the occasion.

The council meeting commenced later that evening. After a one-hour presentation on the CA project on our part and questions from the council members, we were then asked to leave the meeting so that the council could talk amongst themselves about the project. The next day we learned

the good news that the council had made a resolution firmly supporting the project and wished to expedite its implementation.

Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (CACC) established

In response to the council's resolution and with their approval, we scheduled the first meeting for the CACC. Apart from the nine *alap* members of the council, there was a need to identify others who would comprise the CACC. It was decided to draw upon a cross-section of the community to make up the 16 members of the CACC. [The *alap* forms the second tier of authority within the traditional social structure of Jaluit.]

CACC Workshop

On 18 March 2000 we returned to the atoll to convene the first CACC workshop, which was conducted on Jabor, the commercial centre for Jaluit Atoll. There were 19 participants including Jorelik Tibon and myself. There were nine *alap* and representatives from the traditional leaders, fishing cooperative, women's handicraft clubs, business sector, youth, schools, the city manager, and the acting Mayor.

During the morning session of the workshop we spent time discussing the Biodiversity Conservation Plan. We also explained the goals and objectives of the project, the management structure, the resource management plan, and budget.

The meeting with the council was scheduled for the next day, Saturday, to allow for the arrival of members of the council from the different communities within the atoll.

The afternoon session was devoted to income-generating activities such as community-based ecotourism and other potential income-generating projects.

The workshop ended at 6.00 p.m. with all the participants feeling satisfied about what they had learned. The CACC's willingness to contribute to the project in helping implement activities was a highlight of the workshop. Encouraging remarks were made from both the lead agency representative and the acting Mayor. All were very proud to have attended the workshop.

Subcommittees

After the workshop had finished, the CACC felt that there was a need to establish subcommittees to help implement some project activities as the CASO could not single-handedly implement them all. The CACC identified areas that the subcommittees would be responsible for. After brainstorming, we

arrived at eight major areas. We then prioritised the list and it was decided to establish subcommittees under the top four areas identified as Environment and Resources Protection, Women's Handicraft, Guesthouse, and Tour Guide Training. Each subcommittee has a chairman and three members. The Mayor was chosen as the Chairman for the Guesthouse subcommittee. Once the members were assigned to each committee, they then worked on their action plans.

Before we left for Majuro, we met with each subcommittee to review their action plans. Each plan was made and reflected what needs to be done throughout the current quarter. The quarterly action plans will be developed at the scheduled quarterly CACC meetings.

In conclusion, because the CACC members were actively involved and contributed to the workshop, they felt a strong sense of ownership of the project.

From the Manager's Desk

Joe Reti *SPBCP Programme Manager*



As we begin our journey through this new millennium, I wish to convey on behalf of the SPBCP staff and other colleagues in SPREP a belated but nevertheless sincere appreciation to all the CASOs and other readers of CALL who have been supportive of this newsletter over the past few years.

The number of people receiving the newsletter has more than doubled since it was first published. This is an indication of its value and of the excellent support we have received from people such as yourselves.

This first issue of the millennium brings news of efforts under way to prepare CAPs for the end of SPBCP support by the end of 2001. This might not be good news to begin the new millennium. However, preparations for what might prove to be a very difficult time for many projects is an essential priority to plan for, sooner rather than later. I am pleased that a number of CAPs have already consulted widely in the lead-up to the development of their transition strategies. These consultations are vital to identifying key activities for SPBCP support in the next two years.

Part of the preparations for the post-SPBCP era is the development of a Pacific Islands Conservation Trust Fund (PICTF) for nature conservation. This initiative, as some of you will remember, was called for at the 6th Conference on Nature Conservation (Pohnpei, FSM, 1997) and has been supported and endorsed at various regional gatherings thereafter. At a regional workshop in late 1999, a small Steering Committee was established to advance

progress with the development of the PICTF. This committee met for the first time in February 2000 to, amongst other things, map out a programme for the development and establishment of the fund. A draft concept paper for submission to UNDP was also prepared and this submission is expected to be ready for presentation to UNDP in May. We are hopeful that this initiative will receive UNDP and GEF support and will keep you informed of developments through future newsletters.

You will also be interested to know that arrangements are well under way for the conduct of the Community Resource Management Training Course at USP during the second semester of this year. This is a joint initiative of SPREP, USP and the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL). A large number of applications have been received from CASOs and other resource managers who I am sure will find the course refreshing and useful. SPREP and its partners in this course hope to be able to offer this training opportunity on an annual basis so that others from outside the SPBCP can also benefit from it.

A small group of volunteers from SPREP and other partner organisations met recently to help plan for the 7th Conference on Nature Conservation, which

is expected to be held in Honiara, Solomon Islands in 2001. This conference continues the series of regional conferences on nature conservation that started in 1976. I envisage that a number of you will be attending this conference following the success of the 1997 meeting in Pohnpei. Again, this will be an excellent opportunity to showcase your projects so I look forward to some of you attending.

Congratulations to the CASO and staff of the Takitumu CAP (Cook Islands) for winning the inaugural award for the Most Progressive CAP under the SPBCP in 1999. The selection of the winning project was based solely on progress achieved with the implementation of set targets for the year. Whilst two or three other projects came very close to Takitumu, the rest were, for obvious reasons, not in the running. I am hopeful that the situation will be different this year with a lot more projects vying for the top honours.

And while we celebrate the end of 1999 and the beginning of the new millennium, let us not forget

our brothers Nathaniel Lix da Wheya and John Pita in Solomon Islands whose work in their respective projects has been severely constrained by the ethnic tension in their country. Our prayer is for normalcy to be restored as soon as possible so that they can safely return to the projects that are close to their hearts.

Lastly, I wish to remind you again that the 11th SPREP Meeting this year will be held from 9 to 13 October. As in previous years, this meeting will consider a number of important issues for SPREP including the consideration of the SPREP Action Plan 2001–2004 and the Work Plan and Budget for 2001. It is important for you to brief your country delegate to this meeting about your projects in particular and the SPBCP in general so that issues of concern to you can be voiced and addressed by the meeting.

I wish each and every one of you all success for the year 2000.

Joe Reti
Programme Manager, SPBCP

Conservation area summaries 1st quarter January–March 2000

News from the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP-supported Conservation Areas (CAs))

Koroyanitu CA (Fiji)

Raising project awareness targeting the youth was carried out in Abaca village on the weekend of the National Youth Day. About 70 youths attended the event and after classroom activities there was a major clean-up and re-planting campaign at the park. A drama group from the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP) was invited to perform on the importance of protecting our heritage in the context of the vanua (land). On the last day of the awareness-raising activities, the elders took part in the cultural performances.

The Nalotawa Eco-tourism Co-operative Limited has been established. The women of the community will operate the proposed business enterprise and it will service the community and eventually diversify into ecotourism in the future. The community will contribute manpower, structures and a capital sum of \$2000 whilst the Ministry of Women and Culture has offered to contribute to stock.

A business proposal for establishing a shop has been submitted to Korobebe village for their consideration. The proposed shop will service the village, surrounding settlements and the Tuvatu Gold Mine. The project is awaiting the village's feedback on the proposal.

Representatives from SPREP (François Martel), NZODA (Alisi Daurewa) and Tourism Resource Consultants (Bruce Watson and Dave Bamford) attended the first CACC meeting for the millennium. Some of the issues discussed were the legal framework for Koroyanitu, developments in four of the villages, priorities and plans for the next two years on SPREP funds, and NZODA support. The representatives clarified some issues and misconceptions relating to the project.

As part of its income-generating activities, the project has decided to sell polo-neck T-shirts, retailing at \$35/shirt. Forty-two T-shirts have been produced and ten have been sold so far. Other retailing ideas are currently being explored.

With the exception of landowners on whose land mining prospecting is being undertaken, other members of Navilawa village have expressed disappointment at the mining activities. This is causing some tension in the village. This sensitive problem needs to be approached in a delicate manner. Attempts are being made to get the communities together to discuss the issues.

Common acronyms

- SPBCP:
South Pacific Biodiversity
Conservation Programme
- CASO:
Conservation Area Support
Officer
- CAP:
Conservation Area Project
- CA:
Conservation Area
- CACC:
Conservation Area
Coordinating Committee
- SPREP:
South Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

Vatthe's CASO, Charles Vatu checks out the Abaca Visitor Centre in Koroyanitu

Photo : François Martel



Jaluit Atoll CA (Marshall Islands)

John Bungitak has been hired on a temporary basis as acting CASO.

The first CACC meeting was held to familiarise the committee with the project. It was conducted by Jorelik Tibon of the Republic of Marshall Islands Environment Protection Agency and John Bungitak, acting CASO. At the end of the meeting, the committee expressed strong support for the project by adopting a resolution calling for implementation of the project immediately. Sixteen people were chosen to form the CACC.

An introductory CACC workshop was held a week after the first CACC gathering. The workshop covered mainly the project descriptions, the roles of the members, the goal and objectives of the project, and the aims of the project's income-generating activities. The participants expressed keen interest to be involved in the project, and subcommittees among the CACC were formed to work on certain project activities. Each subcommittee developed action plans to implement before the next quarterly meeting scheduled for July 2000.

Meetings were held with different government agencies regarding office space for the project. The Division of National Public Safety kindly

agreed to accommodate the project in one of its rooms. Renovation work (laying floor tiles, a coat of paint, installing window louvres with safety wire screen, installing a new door and plumbing work) was carried out on the office. Power has also been installed. The project office now has computer equipment, a filing cabinet, an office desk, a water fountain, a bookcase and an office couch. Marine survey gear was also purchased to assist with the marine monitoring survey programme.

Funafuti CA (Tuvalu)

The Biodiversity Conservation Officer, Claudia Ludescher, left the country at the beginning of this quarter after finishing her contract with the project. Claudia provided valuable assistance, and the project will miss her enormous dedication not only to the project but also to biodiversity conservation in Tuvalu. Sharon Marks has been appointed the new Biodiversity Conservation Officer (see article on page 12).

The CASO and one of the Conservation Officers attended a Waste Management Workshop held at the Funafuti Falekaupule.

Regular patrols of the CA are still being carried out twice weekly. Two fishermen were caught fishing in the CA. However, owing to insufficient evidence forwarded by the Conservation Officers, they could not be prosecuted.

A verbal request for 20 sets of diving goggles and snorkels for school children to use when they visit the CA was conveyed to the Australian Embassy representative who visited the country. The request has been formally accepted by the Australian Embassy in Fiji and the equipment will be presented to the CAP in June during a visit of the Embassy's first secretary to the country.

The construction of the Interpretive Centre is progressing well and is hoped to be completed in April.

The project gave a presentation at the Kainaki Falekaupule to the women of Vaitupu Island. This one-day workshop focused on biodiversity conservation and home waste management.

A video about the Funafuti Conservation Area (FCA) was screened on Tuvalu Television. The programme was produced by a Japanese company, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK). Ongoing weekly FCA project (FCAP) radio programmes on biodiversity conservation continue to be





broadcast on local radio. The project continues to publish monthly articles in the *Tuvalu Echo* newspaper, informing the public about the activities of the FCAP.

Fortnightly turtle nest counts were carried out during the quarter, and the data has been entered into the project's turtle monitoring programme database.

An ongoing bi-monthly seabird monitoring survey was undertaken during the month of February.

The project has started hiring out its boat, diving equipment and compressor to take tourists to the CA. For this quarter the project collected about \$300 for equipment hire. There were 16 overseas visitors to the CA during the quarter.

The Funafuti Kaupule (Funafuti Town Council) has shown great interest and support for the project and has generously donated over \$10,000 towards the Interpretive Centre. The Kaupule has also informed the project that they are keen to help manage the project when SPBCP support ceases at the end of 2001.

The public interest in biodiversity conservation has significantly increased. The project has had many inquiries from people keen to establish CAs on the other islands of the Tuvalu group.

Local regular fishermen have reported an increase in their catches compared to two years ago. They believe this to be a result of the FCAP.

Rock Islands CA (Palau)

On 15 January, the Belau Tourism Association (BTA), Koror State Government and Palau Conservation Society (PCS) undertook another Crown of Thorns (COTs) collection trip at several dive sites reported to be infested. Almost 300 COTs were collected and buried.

Charlene Mersai left the PCS to begin post-graduate studies in Fiji, leaving the CASO position vacant. Ms Ilebrang U. Olkeriil was appointed to the CASO post on 21 March.

The new CASO attended a meeting with the Koror State Government (KSG) Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection and Live-A-Board Dive Operators, where the Live-A-Board Operators were questioned on their presumed illegal practices in Rock Islands waters. Also present was Adalbert Eledui, Director of

KSG Environment Division. Issues discussed included Live-A-Board's current practices, such as anchorage, waste discharge and disposal, and mooring practices.

Vatthe CA (Vanuatu)

Mr François Martel, SPBCP Socio-Economics Officer, visited Vatthe in January to assist with developing their Transition Strategy. The transition strategy seeks to help the CA projects to adjust when funding from the SPBCP ceases at the end of 2001.

Mr Eric McCullum was recruited as a Peace Corps Volunteer for a two-year term to assist in implementing project activities. The community is currently building accommodation for Eric.

An advertisement promoting Vatthe Lodge and the Conservation Area has been placed in the *Pacific Fact File* book. This publication promotes the Pacific Islands and their tourism-related activities.

Completion of building a conference room, funded by Vatthe Lodge, has been delayed due to some unforeseen circumstances. The conference room is being built by the Sara village youths.

Leaflets promoting the CA were produced and laminated and placed in public areas.

The New Zealand High Commissioner in Vanuatu made a brief visit to the Vatthe CA.

Canada Fund contributed 469,021 vatu towards the Vatthe Lodge Water Supply Project. The Department of Water Resources in Luganville has commenced work on the project.

Takitumu CA (Cook Islands)

Samuela Sesega, SPREP Resource Management Officer, visited Rarotonga in January to work with the CASO on developing the Transition Strategy. As part of collecting information for the strategy, meetings were held with key stakeholders.

The project's bi-yearly newsletter was produced and distributed to interested individuals and groups.

The CASO and Conservation Area Officer escorted the Avarua Cook Islands Christian Church Sunday School students into the conservation area on 29 January.

The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) provides technical and financial assistance to 14 Pacific Island countries to establish and manage a series of community-based conservation areas that demonstrate biodiversity conservation through the sustainable use of natural resources by local people. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) executes the SPBCP with financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through UNDP.

Sixty-four new Kakerori fledglings were sighted by the project's Technical Adviser. The Kakerori is an endangered flycatcher bird found only on Rarotonga. A recovery programme for this bird has been ongoing since 1987.

A water tank was purchased for the CA shelter and will be installed early in the second quarter. Construction work on the shower, toilet block and kitchen area of the shelter was carried out in preparation for the official launch scheduled for April. Locally made interpretation signs are being designed for the interior of the shelter.

Track development and maintenance continued throughout the quarter with assistance from the Global Volunteers. The Global Volunteers Scheme consists of people who do voluntary work of any nature in developing countries around the world. If you wish to know more about them, contact Ian Karika, CASO, Takitumu Conservation Area Project, E-mail: kakerori@tca.co.ck

Marketing advertisements for the Takitumu Conservation Area (TCA) ecotours were placed in: the Canada 3000 flight booklet, which is given out to passengers going to the Cook Islands on Canada 3000 flights; *Jason's What's On* (2000) booklet, which is free to tourists; and in the *Cook Islands Sun*, also free to tourists.

Canada Fund has agreed to fund the TCA interpretation signs to be displayed in Avarua Township.

The Rarotongan Resort, the largest hotel on Rarotonga, has given permission for the project to give presentations on the TCA during their hotel orientations for guests.

Utwa-Walung CA (Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia)

Proposals seeking financial support for certain activities planned by the project were prepared and given to the Kosrae State Government and the FSM National Government. The requests were for infrastructure development to assist the project, such as road, electricity, equipment etc.

A display on the CA's environment has been produced and is now on exhibit at the Visitor's Center. Posters by school children depicting Kosrae's island ecology were displayed at the center for public viewing. Simple directional signs to the new center and other at-

tractions within the CA were constructed and installed.

As part of the Kosrae High School "Close-up Program", the project was involved in organising learning activities on the CA for about 80 students, teachers and parents. The activities involved a presentation, visiting the CA and viewing the exhibition at the Visitor's Center.

The CASO is representing the project on a newly established advisory group for the State Government, the Kosrae Island Resource Management Advisory Group (KIRMAG). The group's main task is to review all large-scale development projects and to give advice to the Environmental Unit on issues arising from the developments.

The project held discussions with the lead agency (the Department of Commerce and Industries [DCI]) and the Lieutenant Governor on transferring the functions of the lead agency to the Development Review Commission (DRC). This partnership would be beneficial to the project when funding from the SPBCP ceases at the end of 2001. The DRC has a legal mandate in sustainable resource management in Kosrae.

North Tarawa CA (Kiribati)

As part of the income-generating component of the project, an ecotourism scoping study was conducted with assistance from *terra firma associates*. The objective of the study was to assess the ecotourism potential of the North Tarawa CA and identify needs for tourism development planning in the CA.

The CACC met at Tabonibara village on 25 February. The CACC meets twice a year and consists of 52 members.

The project carried out a preliminary survey on names, locations and usage of reef patches in the lagoon of Tarawa. This involved consulting with knowledgeable local people.



A typical village scene in North Tarawa CA.

Photo: François Martel

The coconut-oil project is essentially a tool for diverting use and conservation of biodiversity on Niue. This particular technology is not new to the Pacific Islands.

Sa'anapu/Sataoa CA (Samoa)

The CASO attended the District Committee Meeting of the World Conservation Union Marine Protected Area Project on 21 January. Sa'anapu and Sataoa villages are part of the World Conservation Union project.

The CASO was involved in the Division of Environment and Conservation (DEC) planning sessions for the commemoration of World Biodiversity Day on 28 February. As part of the programme for this event, the CASO gave a radio talk about the CA project.

Consultations were carried out with the two village councils to discuss establishing a Tourism Management Committee and the appointment of a Tourism Manager as recommended in the project's Ecotourism Development Strategy document.

Project staff met with tourism operators in the CA to encourage the operators and communities to work closely together on tourism-related activities in the CA. Four tourism operators were approached. The operators were given a briefing of the project's Ecotourism Development Strategy and copies of the document.

A subcommittee, consisting of the two Puluenu (village Mayors), two CACC members

and the CASO, was established to continue consultations with the tourism operators.

In Sataoa village, the villagers are halfway through the construction of their Information Fale (traditional Samoan house), which will be used for ecotourism activities. They are also building bathroom facilities for the use of visitors to the CA.

In Sa'anapu village, the existing Information Fale and its bathroom facilities have been repaired.

Mr Edy Brotoisworo, a Senior Environment Specialist with the Asian Development Bank, visited the CA, accompanied by the CASO.

The CASO and four CACC members participated in the DEC seminar, held in March, to discuss the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (BSAP).

A tentative plan for constructing a bridge over a section of river in Sa'anapu has been prepared. The bridge would allow visitors to view the marine and bird life in the area.

Komarindi CA (Solomon Islands)

The continuing ethnic strife on Guadalcanal has halted most of the project's activities. Despite the difficulties, CASO Nathaniel Lix da Wheya continues to try to keep the project focused.

DME coconut-oil trial in Huvalu forest Conservation Area, Niue-Update

François Martel SPBCP Socio-Economics Officer

In September 1998, a number of potential income-generating projects were identified and prioritised during village workshops, as part of a pre-feasibility study for income-generating options and conducted in consultation with local communities of Niue. Among the projects, Direct Micro Expelling (DME) coconut-oil processing was selected by the communities as the most appropriate to be initiated and a trial project proposal for Hakupu village received approval and funding from the New Zealand Government via SPREP. Direct Micro Expelling technology produces pure, virgin, cold-pressed coconut oil at a small-scale industry level. Dr Dan Etherington invented DME at the Australian National University, in collaboration with the CSIRO.

The coconut-oil project is essentially a tool for diverting use and conservation of biodiversity on Niue. This particular technology is not new to the Pacific Islands. DME presses have been in operation in Samoa, Fiji, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands for a number of years.

Project support

The DME trial project includes the set-up of a Direct Micro Expelling coconut-oil press purchased from the company, KOKONUT PACIFIC Pty Ltd of Australia. The project supported the set-up of a press shelter, the building of a coconut drier, and the training of a team of community members from the village of Hakupu by specialist DME trainers and builders from Samoa. A full feasibility and marketing study for the coconut-oil venture and other by-products, as well as its socio-economic impacts, are included as an integral part of the six-month trial in Hakupu village.

The Niue DME coconut-oil activity remains a pilot one. Although this small cottage industry is ideally suited to the islands of the Pacific, particular economic conditions and community expectations on Niue make it more difficult to implement than in neighbouring islands.

The building in Niue where the DME project is housed

Photo: François Martel



The day was full of positive outcomes for the development of ecotourism in the Koroyanitu Park, such as commitment from government to upgrade the road to Abaca, marketing of Abaca to the tourism industry, and the New Zealand Government (through NZODA) rendering support to the project.

Constraints

Problems were encountered from the early stages of the trial, from decisions about location, to the lack of community consultations prior to the set-up of the micro-project and the lack of appropriate containers for the oil. During the planning phase, the experience of the Women in Business Foundation of Samoa in implementing similar projects in Samoa and Tuvalu was considered the most appropriate for training in building and operations in the context of the Huvalu Forest Conservation Area. The training in DME of coconut oil was well received and allowed a working team from the village of Hakupu to start trial production of coconut oil in January 2000.

Feasibility and marketing study

The feasibility and marketing study for the coconut-oil venture and other by-products will be based on data collected on Niue over four to five months of production and should be able to provide a good measure of financial viability in the village context.

Lessons to other CAPs

The process of setting up the DME trial project is providing very valuable lessons to other Conservation Areas that have coconut resources and community interest in developing new income-generating activities.

The Abaca Familiarisation Day for the Tourism Industry

Unaisi Tawake CASO, Koroyanitu National Heritage Park

"The Abaca ecotourism project is a success story of community-based and managed business." These were the words of Mr Tia Barrett, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji. Indeed, the Abaca Familiarisation Day for the Tourism Industry left a lasting impression on those who attended. The purpose of the day was to inform the tourism industry on the more recent developments of ecotourism products offered at the Abaca Recreational Centre.

The day was great! The events began at 9 a.m. with a traditional Fijian welcoming ceremony accorded to the chief guest, the New Zealand High Commissioner. Speakers at the event came from the tourism industry, Native Land Trust Board and the vanua

of Koroyanitu.

At 9.45 a.m. the Abaca Recreational Centre tour into the Koroyanitu National Heritage Park began. The group was divided into four groups, each led by a guide. The hosts were fun and the visitors marvelled at the sites, the interpretations by the guides and, above all, the commitment of the people of Abaca.

Back from the tour by 12.30 p.m., lunch was ready and the women were entertaining those who took the easy trekking trail whilst the more adventurous ones were still exploring the park. By 2.30 p.m. all had had some lunch and were being entertained by the hosts. Some even joined in with

Children from Abaca Village gathering wood in preparation for the feast for the Open Day event.

Photo: Unaisi Tawake



the men and women to dance the 'taralala' and the 'tuiboto'. The day's events finished at 3.30 p.m. The day was full of positive outcomes for the development of ecotourism in the Koroyanitu Park, such as commitment from government to upgrade the road to Abaca, marketing of Abaca to the tourism industry, and the New Zealand Government (through NZODA) rendering support to the project.

A lot of hard work and commitment contributed to the success of the day. We wish to acknowledge the following for their help: Bruce Watson and Dave Bamford (Tourism Resource Consultants), Russell and Emele (Tourism and Transport Fiji), Mrs Alisi Daurewa (NZ High Commission), Mr Emosi Daunivesi (Co-operatives Department), Mr Manoa Malani (Minister for Tourism), Ronald Lucas (Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific) and the people of Abaca for their continued commitment.

Conservation Trust Fund Steering Committee Meeting

The first meeting of the newly established steering committee for the Pacific Islands Conservation Trust Fund (PICTF) was held in Apia, Samoa, from 14 to 16 February 2000. The committee was formed at a regional trust fund workshop held in 1999 to advance progress with the establishment of the trust fund as recommended by the 6th Conference on Nature Conservation (Pohnpei, FSM, 1997).

At this meeting, the committee discussed a number of issues including:

- revising the concept proposal for submission to UNDP,
- establishing an "Eminent Persons Group" to assist with promoting the trust fund concept, working closely with regional and international conservation non-government organisations in securing resources and developing the trust fund,
- increasing the steering committee's membership, and
- producing a brief overview document outlining the vision, objectives, background and justification for the fund, to be circulated to the Eminent Persons Group, focal points and NGOs.

Coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the overall objectives of the trust fund are fourfold:

1. To secure long-term financial and other support for activities that promote or achieve biodiversity

conservation, or that manage the use of natural resources in a sustainable way.

2. To promote the adoption of innovative conservation and sustainable use practices and lessons across the region and to assist with their incorporation into ongoing national conservation programmes.
3. To assist Pacific Island States and Territories to develop, as appropriate, National Trust Funds as implementation mechanisms for National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, or their equivalents.
4. To enable Pacific Island States and Territories to work together on conservation and sustainable use issues of mutual interest and concern.

Members of the steering committee are drawn from a wide range of government officials, NGO representatives and international expertise.

The development of the Pacific Islands Conservation Trust Fund has been made possible by funding assistance from New Zealand's Pacific Initiative for the Environment (PIE).



The Conservation Area Database: A database of key information on South Pacific conservation areas

James Atherton *SPBCP Database Specialist*

What is the Conservation Area Database?

The Conservation Area Database is a database of key information on conservation areas developed with the assistance of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP). The database was established in 1997 but is being updated with new data on a regular basis. The database was originally established as an application in Microsoft (MS) Access '95 ©, but has since been converted to MS Access '97 ©. Since establishment, data on 17 SPBCP-facilitated conservation areas have been entered into the database under two major categories:

1. *CA Features.* Information on the natural, historical and cultural features of each SPBCP conservation area, along with maps and photographs.
2. *Project Information.* Information on conservation area project activities such as project objectives and outputs, research surveys and inventories, biodiversity indicators, consultancies, staff and addresses, budgets and expenditures, and references.

Functions of the database

The CA database has three main functions:

1. *Viewing and entering data on conservation areas.* CA data can be viewed in a series of forms. If required, these forms can be printed.
2. *Searching for references.* If you want to learn more about some aspect of a CA, you

can perform a search under reference title, author, or publisher to get full reference details.

3. *Producing reports.* The CA database can produce a number of standard reports, which are already specially formatted and can be printed easily.

Who is the Conservation Area Database for?

The CA database has been developed with two main users in mind: SPBCP staff, and Conservation Area Support Officers (CASOs) in conservation areas. Other potential users include environmental agencies, academic institutions and researchers. Although the database is still under development, it is hoped that a prototype version will be released to CASOs at the SPBCP Marine Conservation Sites Training Workshop: Monitoring Indicators of Success, to be held in Samoa in August 2000.

Database Manual

A manual for the CA database has been prepared to assist potential operators in using the database. If you want to learn more about the CA database please contact:

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Ecotourism ventures to be documented

As part of its worldwide initiative to document best practices on sustainable tourism activities, UNEP has given the SPBCP a small grant to write a series of case studies on sustainable tourism and ecotourism in the Pacific.

"After some thought, we have selected five ecotourism ventures around the Pacific that have developed good ecotourism initiatives and have lots of lessons learnt to be shared with the rest of the world," said François Martel, SPBCP Socio-Economics Officer. He said that there are not many documented examples of sustainable tourism in the Pacific.

Four SPBCP-supported conservation areas have been chosen: Takitumu, Cook Islands; Vatthe,

Vanuatu; Komarindi, Solomon Islands; and Koroyanitu, Fiji. Whale-watching in Vavau, Tonga makes up the fifth ecotourism case study.

Mr Martel said that these case studies would be published by either UNEP or SPREP. For each case study, there is a team consisting of a principal author and co-author who have been involved with ecotourism development in the selected areas.

Most of the 17 SPBCP-supported conservation areas have chosen ecotourism activities as a means to help them become self-sufficient when funding from the SPBCP ceases at the end of 2001.



Welcome abroad Ilebrang

Ilebrang Olkeriil has replaced Charlene Mersai, who is currently pursuing postgraduate studies, as the Rock Islands CASO in Palau.

Ms Olkeriil has a degree in Business majoring in Marketing and Management from the University of Newcastle, New South Wales. She is an active community member in Palau. These attributes will be an advantage in her new position.

Ms Olkeriil said: "I can never replace Charlene, but my goal is to continue the project that she began and to further execute more activities. I have always been passionate about the environment. I am very delighted to be working in an area that involves communities to conserve their environment. I have no doubt that the CASO position will be a very challenging task".

Going to Funafuti CA, Tuvalu

Sharon Marks has been appointed to work with the Funafuti CAP under the Australian Volunteers International scheme (formerly known as Australian Volunteers Abroad). The Funafuti Town Council will be paying for her salary as Biodiversity Conservation Officer for a one-year term. Ms Marks replaces Claudia Ludescher who completed her term with the project late last year.

"I am looking forward to working with the Funafuti community especially as they have shown commitment in supporting the Conservation Area. This will be a good hands-on experience for me. I am thrilled about working on a Protected Area on a small island because they are delicate and interesting systems," Ms Marks said.

Ms Marks is a recent graduate of James Cook University in Cairns, Australia, where she gained a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science majoring in



Sharon Marks Photo: Anna Tiraa

Geomorphology and Protected Areas Management.

Prior to going to Funafuti, Ms Marks spent a couple of days in Samoa to meet with SPBCP personnel and to become familiar with the Programme.

A Legend from Fiji How the Beka got its wings

In the olden days there was a Rat who became tired of running to and fro upon his short little legs. He envied the beautiful wings of the Belo or Reef Heron, and watched it fly from rock to rock as it fished for food at low tide. One day he thought of a plan, and asked the Belo to have a race with him, and the Belo agreed. They chose a bay where the sand was firm and on which the Rat could run easily, and the Belo allowed the Rat to start first.

"You are very kind," said the Rat. "See, here under this tree it is cool and shady. Rest here awhile and sleep a little, for you fly so swiftly. When you think that I have gone about half way, wake up and follow, for it will not be difficult for you to catch up with me on those strong wings of yours."

So the Belo folded his wings and went to sleep under the tree and the Rat set off in the direction of

the winning stone. He had not gone far, however, before he stopped and looked around to see if the Belo was asleep. Then, running back, he quietly started to gnaw off the Belo's wings. The Belo, having eaten a large meal, slept soundly and did not wake, and when the Rat had finished his task he fastened the wings to his own furry body, turning himself into a Beka and flew off.

By and by the Belo awoke, and finding that his wings had gone he uttered sad cries and ran about peering here and there under stones and behind bushes looking for them, but not even a feather could he find.

It is said that in the olden days there was a wingless bird in these islands. We have not seen him nor do we know where he has gone. But ask the Beka: he knows!

Success Indicators Workshop, 14 - 25 August 2000, to be held in Samoa

The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) will be hosting a regional workshop on the above dates in Apia, entitled Monitoring for Success—CAP Indicators and Monitoring Methods. This is the culmination of months of intensive work by SPBCP to develop a set of biological and socio-economic indicators that can be applied to monitor and assess the effectiveness of conservation effort in its 17 conservation areas.

The August 2000 workshop is focused on indicators for marine conservation areas only. (A second workshop planned for 2001 will focus on terrestrial CAs.) Thus only CASOs and Conservation Area Officers engaged in marine conservation areas of SPBCP are invited.

Participants will be from the following CAPs:

1. Kiritimati CAP, Kiribati
2. North Tarawa CAP, Kiribati
3. Jaluit Atoll CAP, Marshall Islands
4. Arnavon Islands CAP, Solomon Islands
5. Utwa-Walung CAP, Kosrae, FSM
6. Ngeremeduu CAP, Palau
7. Funafuti CAP, Funafuti, Tuvalu
8. Rock Islands, Palau
9. Ha'apai CAP, Tonga
10. Uafato CAP, Samoa

The development of SPBCP indicators was completed at the end of 1999 following fieldwork in

three conservation areas (CAs)—Uafato (Samoa), Koroyanitu (Fiji) and Vatthe (Vanuatu). A subsequent period of trials followed as the core indicators were field-tested in Uafato to assess the practicality of monitoring methods for community-based monitoring and the requirements for data collection, data management and analyses.

As the culmination of work in this area, the workshop is intended to share this knowledge on indicators and monitoring skills with the rest of the SPBCP CA family of field practitioners, specifically the CASOs and Conservation Area Officers.

Objectives

The workshop will provide training in:

- What indicators are and their role and usefulness in conservation management.
- Specific SPBCP marine CA indicators and what they mean.
- Monitoring methods for the marine indicators.
- Monitoring data collection, management and analyses.

The desired outcome is for all participants to return to their respective CAs, at the end of the workshop, knowing what marine indicators are relevant to their CAs, what monitoring methods are applicable, and where to start in setting up their respective monitoring programmes.

All smiles at the top of the ninth heaven

While waiting to carry out the late afternoon session of a bird monitoring survey in Uafato CA, Samoa, a team of four guys and one girl decided to climb the ninth heaven where, according to local

legends, the god Tagaloa lived. The ninth heaven is the largest visible landscape within Uafato Bay. What a climb it was!

*"Dr Livingstone we presume?"
No, but the smiles say it all for Suiga Tuiavii, Greg Sherley, James Atherton and Ioane Etuale after four hours of solid tramping through the dense forest heartland of Uafato to reach the top of the ninth heaven.*

Photo: Anna Tira



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First World Heritage Officer for the Pacific



What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which the sites are located.

Dr Elspeth Wingham has been awarded a contract for eight months as World Heritage Officer for the Pacific. The position is based at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Office in Apia, Samoa. Dr Wingham will be working closely with Mr Mali Voi who is the Sub-regional Cultural Adviser for Pacific and Member States of UNESCO.

The role of the World Heritage Officer for the Pacific is to promote understanding of World Heritage. The priority will be to work with Pacific Island countries that have ratified the World Heritage Convention. Currently these countries are Solomon Islands, PNG and Fiji. Samoa is in the process of ratifying the Convention and Kiribati will soon follow. Dr Wingham will advise World Heritage personnel in Fiji and PNG on the steps involved in nominating a World Heritage site. She will also work with those countries to help them prepare tentative lists for natural and cultural sites. Dr Wingham will try to visit all UNESCO member states and meet with officials to encourage them to consider World Heritage. "In some countries the Convention is not well known. Once the possibility of listing cultural and natural World Heritage sites is understood and the international significance of this status for a

site, it is hoped that many more Pacific Island States will see the advantages and seek to ratify the World Heritage Convention," said Dr Wingham.

Previously, Dr Wingham was employed by the New Zealand Government under the NZODA Programme to assist Solomon Islands with World Heritage. Dr Wingham and her local counterpart, Mr Ben Devi, worked with the local people on East Rennell and the area achieved listing as a World Heritage natural site in 1998. This is the first World Heritage site within the Pacific Island States; it is on customary land and it recognises traditional land management. "This is a considerable achievement and it is important that the interest and momentum for World Heritage in the Pacific be maintained," said Dr Wingham.

UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

Melanesian Bird Conservation Workshop, Fiji March 2000

The Melanesian Bird Conservation Workshop is the second of three sub-regional workshops for member countries of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The first was held in Rarotonga in April 1999 and included countries from Polynesia. The March 2000 workshop convened in Nadi, Fiji, and included all countries from Melanesia and Nauru. Other invited participants included non-government organisations including Birds Australia, World Wide Fund for Nature, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International and Bird Life International. The latter were co-sponsors with SPREP of the workshop. The purpose of holding these sub-regional workshops is to generate project briefs, which will be used to direct in-country project funding by SPREP's Regional Avifauna Conservation Programme and other funding bodies. It is intended to hold the Micronesia workshop before the end of 2001.

Copies of the unpublished workshop proceedings can be obtained from:

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Conservation

Area

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It is the "living link" between all those who are working on conservation issues in the Pacific region. For those of you who are not already on our mailing list, send us your postal address now together with any news or information on your projects and you will receive a free copy of future issues.