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Photo: N.Woonton / SPREP

Last week, to coincide with World Biodiversity Day, I was pleased to launch our new two-year regional campaign called 'Natural Solutions for Island Resilience.' This campaign has been inspired by the recent Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, which had the theme, 'Natural Solutions for a Resilient Pacific.'

We are hoping that this campaign will contribute to outcomes outlined in the United Nation's Decade of Biodiversity which commenced in 2012. The primary purpose of the campaign is to promote ecosystem-based adaptation as a basis for adapting to climate change and to highlight the value of healthy natural ecosystems to people's wellbeing and livelihoods.

Over the next 24 months you can expect to see the beautiful Natural Solutions logo (pictured on the right) to showcase activities which highlight the importance of valuing our island biodiversity.



David Sheppard
Director General

LATEST NEWS

SPREP UNDERGOES 2014 MID-TERM REVIEW



An Independent Corporate Review of SPREP, as well as a mid-term review of the SPREP Strategic Plan, is currently underway. The review, being conducted by a four person team led by Professor John Hay, will assess the Secretariat's performance over the last five years and review progress in implementing the Strategic Plan. It will also assess the relevance of the priorities and targets in the current plan. This will help guide the ongoing implementation of the plan to 2015 and inform the formulation of SPREP's next Strategic Plan. [Read more...](#)

Photo: Courtesy of Aaron Watson

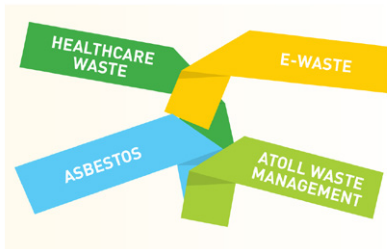
A NEW CLIMATE-RESILIENT HARBOUR LAUNCHED IN THE COOK ISLANDS



For residents on Mangaia, the ceremony to launch their new harbour or 'Avarua Landing', as it is known, was more than just a ribbon cutting event. It was the start of a new life for residents of the most southern island of the Cook Islands. The improved harbour allows for easier transfer of cargo, a vital service for the people of Mangaia. This dream was made real with support from the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project, an initiative that involves 14 small island developing states of the Pacific. [Read more...](#)

Photo: Courtesy of Infrastructure Cook Islands

NEW ONLINE HOME FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PACWASTE



A new webpage has been launched for PacWaste – the four-year (2013-2017) European Union-funded project to improve regional hazardous waste management across the Pacific. The webpage, which will be regularly updated as the project evolves, provides information about the project goals and anticipated timeframes. It will also showcase the hazardous waste interventions put in place to improve asbestos, healthcare waste, E-waste and atoll integrated solid waste management across the region. For more information visit www.sprep.org/pacwaste

SPREP AND GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY SIGN FORMAL AGREEMENT



The bridging of stronger relations has been cemented with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between SPREP and Griffith University in Australia. Over a period of five years the two organisations will collaborate on research, development and capacity building activities relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation policy and programs. The agreement was signed at a workshop for the Pacific iCLIM Project – a joint project between SPREP and Griffith University with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. [Read more...](#)

Photo: Courtesy of Griffith University

SOLOMON ISLANDS TURTLE MONITORING TRAINING IN THE ARNAVON ISLANDS



A group of 25 community representatives involved in turtle conservation undertook specialised Turtle Monitoring training in the remote Arnavon Islands – home to the Pacific’s second largest nesting beach for the critically endangered hawksbill turtle. Participants learned useful facts about turtles such as their life cycle, migration habits and identification. The field practical work included exercises in relocating turtle eggs to safer ground, releasing more than 70 green turtle hatchlings and flipper tagging of ten juvenile turtles. [Read more...](#)

Photo: C.Siota / SPREP

TSUNAMI WORKSHOP AIMS TO IMPROVE EARLY WARNING AND PREPAREDNESS



While we cannot stop a natural disaster from occurring, we can learn from each one and potentially build our capacity to better predict and therefore react to these natural events. The fifth Japan-New Zealand Conference on ‘Lessons learned from the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and progress towards a safer Southwest Pacific’ was held in Apia, Samoa last month. Experts in hazard and risk assessment, seismic and volcanic activity and in disaster risk management from Samoa, Japan and New Zealand participated at this one-day workshop held at SPREP. [Read more...](#)

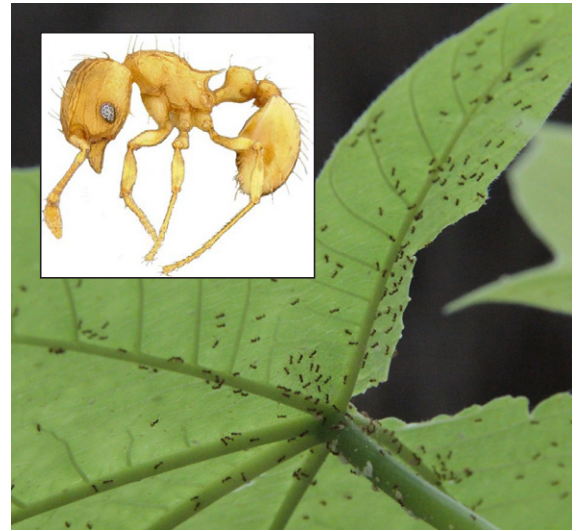
Photo: A.Carvan / SPREP

For more news from SPREP please visit our website at www.sprep.org

THE DESTRUCTIVE LITTLE FIRE ANT



Photos: D.Haynes and P.Skelton / SPREP



Preventing the spread of invasive species and minimising the damage that they cause is critical for the protection of biodiversity in the Pacific region – not to mention trade, agriculture, health and tourism. One invasive species that is having a massive impact is the little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*).

This tiny ant, only 1.5mm in length, is an introduced invasive species now found widely in the Pacific region including New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Wallis and Futuna and Vanuatu.

In 2013, SPREP worked with Les directions régionales de l'Environnement (DIREN), the Mahina Commune and the Hawaii Ant-Lab to manage the environmental and economic impacts of the little fire ant in French Polynesia and the Pacific. This important pilot study, funded through Fonds Pacifique, has improved national capacity to manage this destructive species and developed processes to prevent it from spreading further.

Tahiti has a near-ideal climate for the successful establishment and spread of this tiny and destructive ant. Since its arrival around a decade ago, the little fire ant has established populations in ten of the 13 communities of the Windward Islands.

This species poses a serious threat to the economy, ecological health and social wellbeing of Tahiti and its inhabitants. Little fire ants form dense three-dimensional super-colonies that cover the ground, vegetation and tree canopies. These tree-dwelling ants often fall from vegetation onto people and animals below, stinging their victims and potentially causing blindness in domestic animals. In natural ecosystems, they prey on, or drive out native fauna, leaving an ecosystem depleted of much of its pre-existing animal life.

In Tahiti, ants are often accidentally transported to landfill sites in green waste. Landfill sites have put in place regulations on transported waste to control this accidental spread. This severely limits the ability of local communities to transfer domestic rubbish for disposal. Expert staff from SPREP's Waste Management and Invasive Species teams worked together to find possible solutions to this problem.

During the course of the study, it was identified that commercial composting can be used to kill little fire ants in collected green waste. The high temperatures reached inside composting piles are hot enough to effectively kill all insects in the compost pile, thus making it safe to use the composted material for gardening and farming without risking accidental transfer of little fire ants. This proposed strategy could reduce waste disposal costs, and help control the movement of invasive insect species in Tahiti.

As a direct result of this work, a set of Standard Operating Procedures for the control, monitoring and surveillance of little fire ants was developed for the region. Additionally, a review of biosecurity procedures and legislation was undertaken. These measures will assist French Polynesia, and many other countries and territories in the region to effectively deal with this destructive little ant.

FROM YOUNG PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT ADVOCATE TO TECHNICAL EXPERT

A historic step for SPREP has seen its work in building the capacity of Pacific youth come full circle. For the first time, the inter-governmental regional organisation has branched out, recruiting a technical expert in the water sector to be based in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This position will provide technical advice to the water sector in the North Pacific.

Ms. Moriana Phillip from the Marshall Islands has only recently taken on this role but she is no stranger to the organisation. She was also part of the inaugural Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum coordinated by SPREP in 2005, which led to the formation of the Econesians youth group founded by a collection of ten students of the University of the South Pacific.

“We were fortunate enough that SPREP funded us, brought us to Apia to be part of the Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum which then empowered us to return back to Fiji and develop our mission statement and our ambitions and commitments,” said Moriana.

“The Econesians have continued to grow over the years from ten founding members in 2005 to over 300 members now.”

Now as a technical SPREP staff member providing strategic advice and technical expertise on water issues, Moriana’s environment background and experience will help provide strong support in the Northern Pacific.

“I think it’s a really great opportunity for SPREP to expand its work in the north and to help really encourage ownership of the projects the organisation is doing. It really is a challenge but I am looking forward to it,” said Moriana.



Pictured above: Ms Moriana Phillip.
Photo: N.Woonton / SPREP.

Moriana also plans to continue advocating for Pacific people and youth to become environment leaders.

“We must involve our youth in promoting environmental awareness because they are our future and we are facing so many challenges. Being in this position gives me an opportunity to be on the ground and continue this personal commitment towards environment protection that I started as a young person. I like that.”

COMING UP

29 July – 1 August: Forum Leaders’ Meeting (Palau)

1 – 4 September: UN Conference on SIDS (Samoa)

25 September: COP to the Noumea Convention (RMI)

26 September: COP to the Waigani Convention (RMI)

29 September: Pacific Environment Forum (RMI)

30 September – 2 October: SPREP Meeting of Officials (RMI)

3 October: Environment Ministers’ Session of SPREP Meeting (RMI)

6 – 14 October: CBD COP 12 (Korea)

4 – 9 November: CMS COP (Ecuador)

1 – 12 December: UNFCCC COP 20 (Peru)

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Our vision: The Pacific Environment,
sustaining our livelihoods and natural
heritage in harmony with our cultures.



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Environment Programme