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NEWSLETTER OF THE RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION FOUNDATION OF PNG

8th Pacific Islands conference on conservation

The 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas was held in Alotau, the capital of Milne Bay province from 22nd to 26th October 2007. The theme “*Serving communities in a rapidly changing world*” was the focus of presentations and side meetings through out the week.

PNG government through the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). The conference was one of the biggest meeting in the region with over 450 participants from all over the Pacific and around the world.

To uplift the profile of the conference, the ceremony was officially opened by the Governor General Sir Paulias Matane and

November 2007

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Ambiki, Primas and Margaret of Mengino village sharing ideas with a conference participant from Milne Bay.

Crater Mountain Project Manager Primas Kapi, Crater Mountain Project Mapping officer Stanley Jacob, and Conservation Education Resource Centre (CERC) officer Ambiki Kome attended the conference which was organized by the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SPREP) with the support of

closed by the Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare. The Minister for Environment & Conservation, Honourable Benny Allen was present through the entire conference.

The aim of the conference was to involve all conservation organisations, relevant

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Dear readers

This is our final newsletter for the year and it seems as if the year just flew by.

Well RCF has been quite active in implementing all planned activities for the year 2007 with a few more activities to be accomplished before the year draws to a close.

It certainly has been a year full of challenges but with the commitment of staff, alot has been accomplished.

The organisation has also had several staff attending various conferences, workshops and courses throughout the year. Staff development has been an important aspect for the organisation as it continues to promote biodiversity conservation in its two programs.

With that we would like to wish you all a

Merry Christmas and A Prosperous New Year!

Happy reading!

Daniel attends property management course

Since its inception in 1986, RCF has expanded its workforce, and its assets.



RCF assets include the Crater Mountain project two storey building in fore ground, the transit house on the right and Peckover house at the back.

Within the RCF compound at Chinatown Goroka, there are three buildings which serve different purposes. And as part of its longterm strategy, RCF has prioritised property management which is essential for the lifespan of its properties. Hence, under PNG Incentive fund,

Daniel Komarake was sponsored to attend a course on 'Introduction to property management' in Port

Moresby. The training was conducted by the Real Estate Institute of Queensland on the 13th -14th November. The course was attended by real estate company agents around the country and RCF was the only NGO to attend. Daniel said 'I had no idea at all about

property management. Being among real estate agents I felt small. It was very challenging but I learnt alot of important information and knowledge in managing property'. He added that 'I am looking forward to working with the managers in identifying means of managing RCF's assets'. He said that 'property management is not just about buildings. There are many aspects to it which require proper planning and management'.

Daniel's knowledge and skills will be essential in future planning and use of RCF property.

He is the last Con.Ed staff to be officially sponsored under staff development in the Conservation Education program for 2007.

Julien Pochimel has just completed a one year Post Vocational Technical Education (PVTE) course at the University of Goroka. She will graduate this December with a Diploma in PVTE.

RCF is grateful to PNG Incentive Fund for its support in capacity building for all Con.Ed. staff.

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government departments, community based organisations, landowners and donors to review and develop Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in Pacific Island countries for 2008 to 2012. At the same time the conference provided excellent opportunities for all stakeholders to exchange ideas, experiences and build network and partnership to work collaboratively to achieve a common goal.

Therefore it was important for RCF, as a conservation NGO, to have three of its representatives to attend the conference. They had the opportunity to listen to the successes, failures, new ideas, strategies and approaches from various organisations and experts involved in conservation work, at the local, regional and international level.

The exchange of ideas and information at the conference was significant to RCF, because at the end of each year, staff stage a three day planning meeting to review, evaluate and plan for the new year. The learning experience of other conservation workers will be useful for RCF to develop strategies during the planning meeting to achieve better results in future.

The discussions during side meetings also helped broaden understanding of the real issues and constraints faced in doing conservation with communities in protected areas.

Apart from staff, Margaret Isikel of Mengino village in Crater Mountain was sponsored by the Christensen Foundation to attend the conference.

Margaret is a member of the management committee in Mengino. She is involved in the monitoring and enforcement of Conservation laws in Mengino village.

For Margaret it was a first time experience to attend an international meeting as this.

For all who attended the conference, the take home message highlighted by various speakers is that 'Conservation is not an isolated issue, but it is everyone's concern.' Successful conservation efforts will not be possible if it does not meet community development needs and aspirations. This can only be achieved through sustainable economic development.

Crater Mountain Project activity updates

Mengino Rural water supply opening

The opening of the Mengino rural water supply will be staged on 3rd December. Crater Mountain Project and Admin Staff will be witnessing the ceremony. A representative from the Rural water supply and sanitation project (RWSSP) will also be present at the opening.

The Mengino community is well prepared for the event with the establishment of a new guest house there.

Eco-tourism

Tourists wanting to visit Mengino can now be accommodated at the newly constructed guest house. The guest house is located

at the end of the village. It is owned by the community and has four rooms fitted with beds.

This is the second guest house in Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA). The other guest house is in Haia.

The guest house initiative is part of

the drive to promote eco-tourism in the CMWMA.

The Abigarama and Maimafu communities have also begun dialogue



Mengino community discussing environmental threat issues during awareness

amongst themselves and RCF staff to build guest houses as a source of income.

CMWMA awareness

The awareness activity in the CMWMA is in progress with the viewing of *'The Crater story'*, and

other environmental threat documentaries as well as discussions on environmental threat posters.

Diploma in *'Environment and conservation studies'* student, Tony

Karolus, is currently engaged with the Crater Mountain Project awareness team.

During the duration of the course this year, Tony had shown enthusiasm toward all tasks and assignments. His interest in assisting the Crater Mountain Project team in conducting awareness is an indication of his concern for the environment.

Tony is creating awareness on the environmental threat posters while Titus Jerry the

Rural Livelihoods Field Officer is in charge of showing the environmental threat documentaries. They are being assisted by Martin Moses the Environmental Health Officer. The team is currently in Abigarama conducting the final awareness session with the community there.

Celebrating United Nations Day

Goroka International School celebrated the United Nations (UN) Day on October 31st and invited RCF to participate. The purpose of the celebration was to create awareness in students on the eight millennium development goals developed by the United Nations.

The Con.Ed program was invited to set up an information stall to promote the UN's seventh millennium development goal *'Ensure environmental*



sustainability'. Con.Ed staff prepared poster

displays, brochures, and gave a powerpoint presentation on RCFs work in promoting environmental sustainability. As different classes visited the stall, staff talked about RCF Conservation efforts.

The picture inset shows students listening to Igsie Jimike's powerpoint presentation on RCF activities which promote *'biodiversity conservation'* to ensure environmental sustainability.

Julien Pochimel and Daniel Komarake explained the Environmental threat posters and Con.Ed Abus posters to the students.

Rainforest habitat fieldtrip

The Diploma in *Environment and conservation studies* course ended the semester with an exciting field trip to the Rainforest Habitat in Lae on the 13th -14th September.

The purpose of the field trip was to complement course work, explore ex situ conservation efforts and write reports which is an assessable task toward students' assessment.

The trip also provided opportunity for students to listen to zoo keepers and to observe what is done on the ground in terms of conservation efforts.

The variety of activities designed for students to accomplish while on the trip included questionnaires and

visits to other ecologically disturbed sites like the Markham River and Voco Point.

Students really enjoyed the field trip, while at the same time learnt a lot which they shared during reflections and evaluation.

The four pioneer students were accompanied by staff involved in teaching the course.

Outdoor activities are vital at all levels of education to fully achieve student centred learning. ConEd is capable of complementing theory with field trips due to dynamic staff that incorporate outdoor activities to enhance conservation education.

A friendly Boelens python



Emmie with zoo keeper in foreground handling a Boelens python while students Kenneth second from right, Tony at the back and snake handler(in yellow shirt) look on.

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