

ARCBC SUPPORTS THE CONFERENCE ON PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Building on Lessons from the Field

The Philippines is set to host the 3rd Southeast Asia Regional Forum of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) in 2002, the results and recommendations of which shall be fed into the World Parks Congress in South Africa in 2003.

In preparation for the Regional forum, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (DENR-PAWB), Birdlife International, the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), and the HARIBON Foundation, with major support from the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC), organised a national conference on protected area management to showcase the different stories and lessons (both successes and failures) in the protection of biodiversity-rich areas. The event was held on November 12-

16, 2001 at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City.

The Conference was attended by more than 255 representatives from national government agencies, local government units, non-government and people's organisations, indigenous people's groups, the media, protected area managers, researchers, academicians, and community leaders.

DENR Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez, who was the Guest Speaker, stressed the need for heightened awareness building for all stakeholders of protected areas to combat issues leading to environmental degradation. Adding that efforts should focus on sustainable protected area management, he challenged the participants to finish projects that had been initiated even when international donors have ceased to provide assistance.



Participants at the Conference on Protected Area Management in the Philippines held in Davao City.

Selected regional and local experts and protected area managers shared and discussed their various experiences in relation to protected area management. Topics covered the following:

- Local governance;
- Project design;
- Protection initiatives outside the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act;
- Community organising and sustainable livelihood;
- Tenurial instruments;
- Resource management and protection measures;
- Sustainability factors in protected area management;
- Institutionalisation of protected areas; and
- Other topics relevant to protected area management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants worked in smaller groups per topic and provided some recommendations to improve protected area management in the Philippines. Among these are:

Local Governance

- Build good relationships between DENR and local government units;
- Obtain internal and external support to sustain protected area management operations; and
- Involve local communities in designing projects and integrate local initiatives in conservation.

Project Design

- Encourage community involvement in project design and use local knowledge in conservation;
- Encourage the DENR to review its priorities on various aspects of protected area management;
- Develop communities' self reliance in terms of developing technical and financial

capabilities in project management; and

- Provide a clear indicator of a project's success (because it is important to know why marine biodiversity, for example, has not recovered in 20 years despite the presence of heavily-funded projects).

Protection Initiatives Outside the NIPAS Act

- Draw lessons from indigenous knowledge on how to conserve natural resources;
- Conduct continuing education for children and youth as future environmental protectors;
- Design and implement long term monitoring and documentation of learning; and
- Provide people's organisations with control of and access to areas immediately outside their community-based management jurisdiction.



Mt. Apo National Park

Community Organising and Sustainable Livelihood

- Allow the Protected Area Management Board to determine and approve the criteria for livelihood to be implemented in the protected area;
- Develop specific guidelines

- for sustainable livelihood;
- Ensure sustainable livelihood activities for people's organisations, local government units and local communities;
- Re-think livelihood approaches to consider existing livelihood activities;

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- Reconcile community organising activities and livelihood in non-NIPAS and NIPAS areas;
- Determine, together with the people, their vision for their community;
- Engage various stakeholders in protected area management;
- Conduct Information, Education and Communication, and capability building activities;
- Review DENR policies and make necessary reforms for effective protected area management; and
- Allocate a portion of the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) for use by protected area communities in managing natural resources at their own discretion.

Tenurial Instruments

Plans and activities in this area should consider the following questions:

- What laws should prevail over a common protected area, NIPAS or the Indigenous People’s Rights Act (IPRA)?
- Should special laws prevail over general laws in areas such as Palawan and Mt. Kitanglad?
- What instrument would apply to ensure the rights of tenured migrants in land now being claimed by Indigenous Peoples?
- In Samar and Batanes, what tenurial instruments would apply for built-up areas in timberlands or zones?
- In ancestral domain claims within protected areas, what would be the proper management body or mechanism?
- How should existing management projects be harmonised within protected areas and ancestral domains?
- How can non-government organisations and other stakeholders introduce confidence-

building measures for indigenous groups?

Resource Management and Protection Measures

- Results of biodiversity monitoring for park management should be known to local communities;
- Support for facilities, transportation and personnel must be in place to ensure sustainability of protected area management;
- Local communities, aside from the army and the Philippine National Police, should be

involved in protecting the area;

- The IPAF should go back to the protected area for its maintenance; and
- For management to be credible, managers must present evidence of incremental improvement.

A field trip to Mt. Apo National Park, specifically to the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) project within the protected area, and the Philippine Eagle Center at Kalinan, Davao culminated the conference. ■

Surfing the Web... of Life

The UNESCO **Information Programmes and Services (IPS)** <http://www.unescobkk.org/ips/> serves as a gateway to information resources on education, natural and social sciences, culture, and communication/informatics. Located at UNESCO, Bangkok and Regional Bureau of Education, IPS is mandated to ensure greater utilization of information by those who formulate policies and plans and implement programmes in order to achieve UNESCO’s mission and goals in its fields of competence. The excellent web site of IPS facilitates information searching and retrieval using resources such as Bibliographic Database, Electronic Virtual Library, Webcast, Portals, Electronic Articles and Electronic Publications and other web-based facilities.

ItrainOnline www.itrainonline.org is a joint initiative of six organisations experienced in computer and Internet training in the developing world. ItrainOnline responds to the need for a single source on the web containing a selection of the best and most relevant computer and Internet training resources for development and social change. The web offers materials and annotated links to high-quality resources in English, Spanish and French, and many other languages, on topics ranging from computer and Internet basics to highly technical areas, and the ways that civil society and development organisations can increase their impact using these tools.

The **Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific** (RECOFTC) provides professionals with new skills and capacities to successfully implement community forestry

activities. As part of its mandate to be a centre for exchange of information, RECOFTC produces and disseminates a range of publications and materials on community forestry. As the regional facilitator for the Forest, Trees and People Program (FTPP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization, RECOFTC also distributes various FТПP and FAO publications. It also has a range of materials from WWF, IUCN, and AFN. The Center has started disseminating information and publications through the Internet. More information is found at <http://www.recoftc.org/publications.html>

Oneocean.org (<http://www.ocean.org>) is widely recognised as the source of information on coastal management. It offers state-of-the-art guidance and training materials covering all aspects of coastal management, including planning, fisheries and habitat management, legal and jurisdictional issues, management of development impacts, and participatory management methods. A winner of major Internet industry awards (1999 Philippine Web Awards and 2000 Anvil Award of Excellence), it helps promote biodiversity conservation through its popular Ocean Ambassadors section, which promotes migratory and endangered marine species as international, rather than local, resources, the loss of which can have global repercussions. Oneocean.org was developed and is currently maintained by the six-year (1996-2002) Coastal Resource Management Project of the Philippines Department of Environment of Natural Resources (DENR), and supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAid).