

Conservation Society of Pohnpei CSP



Promoting the protection of Micronesia's unique Emerald Isle

Considered to be the “emerald” of Micronesia, Pohnpei is a lush, green island formed five million years ago by turbulent volcanic activity. The island is home to a wide variety of natural habitats including barrier reefs, lagoons, mangrove forests and upland forests. It is one of the wettest places on earth, with an average rainfall in excess of 400 inches/year. Pohnpei's dwarf cloud forests are among the lowest in the world at 450 meters and the volcanic bowl of the island boasts the largest intact lowland tropical forest in the world. These



Upland Forest Watershed Reserve WFR

habitats support a remarkable abundance of unique flora and fauna, sixteen percent of which is found nowhere else on earth. The Serehd (Pohnpei Lory), a brilliant red bird with hints of green and gold, and the Pohnpei mountain skink, a tiny coppery lizard, are both completely unique to the island. Outside the reefs of Pohnpei, scientists recorded the largest grouper spawning aggregation in the Indo-Pacific region. Recent assessments have revealed new coral and fish species on Pohnpei's reefs, as well as coral species range extensions.

Unfortunately, the unique habitats of Pohnpei are disappearing at an alarming rate and will continue to do so unless preventive measures are taken. In the past 25 years, the intact interior rainforest of Pohnpei has been reduced by more than 25 percent. Native plant and animal species are being threatened by introduced non-native species. While water pollution, coral dredging, sand mining, mangrove clearing and over-fishing of certain species are putting the coral reefs and its marine ecosystems at risk. The



Diversity of marine life on the coral reefs

importance of these environments is only beginning to be understood and the possibilities of their future value are immeasurable. Pohnpei encapsulates a microcosm of many distinctive ecosystems, which the island's inhabitants rely upon. Therefore, the protection of these areas is not only a necessity for ecological health and natural preservation, but also for the welfare of present and future generations of Pohnpeians.

The Conservation Society of Pohnpei, founded in 1998 by a group of concerned citizens is the premier conservation organization in the Federated States of Micronesia. CSP aims to increase community involvement in the conservation and management of Pohnpei's natural resources; to build local capacity through public and private partnerships; to develop alternatives to unsustainable practices; and to promote laws and policies that support these objectives. It presently has three main program areas: marine, terrestrial and education. Although work on environmental policy, organizational development and capacity building, and of course conservation finance are also integral components to its mission.

Marine Program



Fish & coral monitoring in the MPA

The protection of Pohnpei's delicate marine environment has been tackled using a dual approach, merging scientific methods and technology with traditional community resource management. There are eleven Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) that have been designated by law; CSP currently works in close collaboration with five of these areas: Nahtik and Kehpara in Kitti, Dehpek and Mwand in U, and Sapwitik in Nett. The goal is to establish a collaborative MPA management network. This entails the building of community support for the MPAs, the education of citizens to improve their compliance, and the development of the capacity of conservation enforcement officers to impose the established rules and regulations. The team is also currently conducting a Rapid Environmental Assessment (REA) of Pohnpei's reefs,

evaluating the species of coral, fish and sea grass populations. CSP also been studies and manages the Spawning and Aggregation Sites (SPAGS) in order to better understand and protect the mass spawning of groupers and ensure the replenishment of the fish stocks in the surrounding areas for the coming year.

Educational Awareness Program



Youth presenting at the Y2Y fair

CSP's Environmental Awareness Program works to educate all Pohnpei residents about the importance of their surrounding environment and encourages their participation in conservation activities. Though CSP works with all ages, it especially targets Pohnpei's youth, the future of this island. The Society's primary programs are the *Youth-to-Youth* in Environmental Awareness and Education Program which works with grade six classes from seven local schools; the *Green Road Show* which

travels to all the elementary schools on the island and works with grade five classes; an *Environmental Club* for high school students and *Community Outreaches*, which involve all Pohnpeian citizens. CSP has also directed its public education efforts towards the production of several publications, which include a quarterly newsletter, weekly radio programs, video, posters, a children's activity booklet, and numerous resource materials.

Terrestrial Program



Watershed stream flow monitoring

The creation of a Watershed Forest Reserve (WFR) to protect Pohnpei's pristine upland forest has been a major focus of CSP's terrestrial program. Demarcating the WFR and its monitoring remains a core objective, however presently, the team is specifically focused on the Enipein Watershed, as the development of a management strategy for its protection was listed as one of the highest research priorities for the FSM in 2005. The project goal is to establish a database of baseline information on the correlations between stream flow, sediment load and rainfall from gauge measurement and monitoring studies. These activities will provide solid information on the effects that land clearing activities have on the quality of the watershed and the sedimentation runoff levels to the coral reefs. CSP is also working with the German Forestry Project to set up community-based management for the Enipein Mangrove Forest Reserve. This consists of participatory workshops, zoning demarcation, and monitoring mechanisms. Another concern is the control of invasive species. CSP is working with the State Invasive Species Task Force to eradicate and raise awareness on the most threatening introduced species.

Environmental Policy



CCOs with the MPA sign

Like many places in the world, Pohnpei's existing environmental laws are often incompatible to Pohnpei's circumstances or lack the regulations to successfully support their enforcement. CSP is working closely with the state and local governments to rectify this. To be better able to patrol, protect and prosecute violators in the Marine Protected Areas (MPA), CSP works with the state Marine Conservation Enforcement officers. Community participation is also integral to improving the effectiveness of the environmental policies and is facilitated through participatory workshops, collaborating with traditional leaders, and the enlistment of volunteers as Community Conservation Officers (CCOs). The aim is to effectively create integration between local management and state agencies to support the established policies.

Organizational Development & Capacity Building

CSP's approach to protecting the environment focuses on developing the capacity of the surrounding communities to manage the areas themselves. The Society endeavors to work with partners to assist these local organizations in effectively implementing conservation programs that will be of benefit to all parties. In order to be able to facilitate these objectives, CSP is also committed to the constant development of its staff's skills and capabilities. Individual career development is encouraged and trainings for staff and board members are regularly scheduled. The organization is able to maintain a focus on its strategic goals through the setting of 3-year plans, evaluations and strategic planning exercises.