Peperuare 2017

Marae Moana Hosts Meeting on MPA’s

From 20-24 February the Meeting for Large Marine Protected Areas (LMPA’s) took place on Rarotonga at the USP Rarotonga Campus.

The cooperation between LMPAs in the Pacific which includes the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA), the Marae Moana of the Cook Islands, the Natural Park of the Coral Sea (New Caledonia), and the Pacific Remote Island Marine National Monument USA (PRIMNM) have been collaborating to share experiences and explore ways of strengthening cooperation since 2013 and the latest meeting was in Fiji in 2015 which was the 4th meeting convened. The cooperation seeks to bring the managers of the Large MPAs to share lessons in areas such as; capacity building, policy legal frameworks, sustainable financing mechanisms, research, surveillance and enforcement. The purpose of the Rarotonga meeting was to build on the previous discussions and specific areas identified from the 2015 meeting which were planning, development and management processes of Large MPAs, sustainable financing and exploring other cooperation and partnerships.

During the week Te Ipukarea Society was able to give two presentations. Kelvin presented on our progress and the process we have used to conduct an ecosystem services evaluation as a part of the Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP). Liam presented on the Mana Tiaki – Protect a Little Paradise visitor payback initiative which the Society is implementing in partnership with tourist accommodators and businesses on Rarotonga.

We thank Marae Moana for inviting Te Ipukarea Society to take part in this meeting, to meet with managers of Large MPA’s from around the Pacific, and learn from their successes and challenges they have experienced. We look forward to the formal designation of Marae Moana sometime this year following endorsement by cabinet.
**Poster Competition Signs go up at Social Centre**

During the month of February Liam and Alanna were able to install two of our awesome Te Ipukarea poster competition sign boards at some prime locations at the Social Centre Beach in Nikao. The two sign boards were placed on the toilet blocks, near where people like to rinse off after swimming. We would like to thank MP for Nikao Aunty Ngamau Munokoa for her support in the placement of these signs.

These sign boards show the winning entries from the four age categories of our poster competition held in 2015. The theme of that competition was “Protecting our Marine Life”. Some of the messages include: Don’t litter on our beaches/oceans, respect our fish and bird life, protect our coral, and don’t feed our fish with bread.

We have taken our time to ensure these signs go to the best possible beach locations in Rarotonga and therefore are most visible to both tourists and locals. There are now five signs located around Rarotonga beaches, locations include: Tikioki Triathlon Beach, outside the Sailing Club in Muri, At the Avana Rugby Field beach, and now two at the popular Social Centre.

We have four signs left so if your village wants one for their beach get in contact with us!

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**Liam attends GIS Workshop**

From the 27th February to 1st March Liam was lucky to be involved in a short “Introduction to GIS” workshop. GIS, or Geographic Information Systems is a tool that people can use to father spatial information and place it into a system which can model this information. An example of these systems include software (computer programs) which are used to map areas of interest. In many

Some of the information which can be mapped using GIS includes locations of objects, geographic features, areas, or lines. Examples include the site of a house, a mountain peak, an urban zone, a forest, a wetland area or a road. In GIS systems, tables are first used to store information (such as Excel), however when applied to the system these can be converted into different layers of a map. Layers could include: a satellite image of Rarotonga as a base, with a second layer showing all the roads on the island, with a third layer showing all the house sites on Rarotonga. These layers can be switched on and off so as to make it easier to see the particular information you are looking for.
Despite the incredible usefulness of GIS, it is still underutilized, this is due to a few reasons. GIS does need a lot of equipment; and often this equipment can be very expensive; including Computers (Laptop, PC) Software (MapInfo, QGIS and ArcGIS) Satellite Imagery or GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) or GPS (Global Position System). During the workshop attendees used the QGIS software which is relatively simple to use and is open-sourced (meaning it is free to download online).

Liam was happy to attend this workshop as his knowledge of GIS is limited, and he acknowledges the importance of GIS in conservation work around the world. Now that he has a basic knowledge of GIS he hopes to build on this knowledge through projects and hopefully follow up with a more detailed course in the future.

This workshop forms part of the capacity building programs within the Ridge to Reef (R2R) Programme. Meitaki ma’ata to the National Environment Service for inviting Te Ipukarea Society to take part in this workshop.

**Staff Complete First Worm Farm Run of 2017**

In February Alanna and Liam were able to take the Te Ipukara electric truck around Rarotonga to check all the school’s worm farms and compost bins we gifted last year. We knew the worms would have not coped well over the summer holidays due to students and staff being absent, and sure enough many worm farms had lost their worms (likely starved to death). However a few schools had managed to keep their worms fed over the school holidays, and some of the compost bins are beginning to create something which really looks like COMPOST.

Alanna and Liam will continue doing worm farm checks, and will aim to do these every 1-2 months. Next end of year holidays we will try and organise some caretakers for worms over the long break! (5-10 minutes a week should be all it takes).

We would like to congratulate once again Imanuela Akatemia for their well looked after worm farm, and also newcomer Takitumu School on a happy worm farm and their compost bin which is the furthest along in creating compost. Well done to all students and staff involved!

**Our Rights to a Healthy Environment - Part 1.**

Most people would agree that all human beings deserve the right to a healthy environment, but what exactly are your rights when it comes to the environment? To be enforceable, rights must be
embedded in fundamental legal documents. In this article Te Ipukarea Society looks into some of the international laws relating to people’s rights to having a healthy environment.

The Arorangi Landfill is nearing full capacity, and has been blamed for leaching into groundwater destined for our lagoons.

According to The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), more than two million annual deaths and billions of cases of diseases are attributed to pollution. All over the world, people experience the negative effects of environmental degradation and ecosystems decline. These include water shortage, fisheries depletion, natural disasters due to deforestation and unsafe management and disposal of toxic and dangerous wastes and products.

Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was ratified by United Nations (UN) member countries in 1948, the principle of basic human rights has gained global acceptance. No global consensus existed before the UDHR stated that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Among its 30 articles, the declaration asserts that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person, and guarantees to all people the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being. That last guarantee has been elaborated in subsequent international agreements, including the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child which the Cook Islands is signatory to, which states that nations will: “recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health,” and specifically notes that governments will take measures that account for “the dangers and risks of environmental pollution.”

There are three main dimensions of the interrelationship between human rights and environmental protection:

- A healthy environment as a pre-requisite for the enjoyment of human rights (implying that human rights obligations of States should include the duty to ensure the level of environmental protection necessary to allow the full exercise of protected rights);
- Certain human rights, especially access to information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters, as essential to good environmental decision-making (implying that human rights must be implemented in order to ensure environmental protection); and
- The right to a safe, healthy and ecologically-balanced environment as a human right in itself (this approach has been debated).

**Next month’s edition will feature the second part of this article**

**Thanks for reading this month’s newsletter. See you next time!**

*Ka kite e Kia manuia*