Marae Moana it is!

On Friday 21 February 2014 Prime Minister Henry Puna announced the winner of the search for a uniquely Cook Islands name for our marine park; a competition that was launched in late November 2013.

Over 140 entries were received, six of those being from winner, Tereora College seventh former Bouchard Solomona.

His winning entry, Marae Moana, was chosen by the Prime Minister because it is simple, straightforward, and captures what the marine park is all about - the sacredness of the ocean.

The winning name, together with the graphic (designed by June Hosking in 2013), will be used extensively on products, printed material, clothing, media releases, websites, and pretty much everything associated with Marae Moana (Cook Islands marine park).

Marae Moana legal review workshop

The Marae Moana (Cook Islands marine park) steering group members participated in a Legal Review Analysis workshop earlier this month. The purpose of the workshop was to be briefed on and to review the results of the legal analysis that was recently completed in preparation for establishing Marae Moana.

The legal analysis was broken into 2 pieces of work. Part A, authored by Justin Rose (an IUCN legal consultant) looked into the current status of the marine park, options for legislation to establish the marine park and principles for marine protected area legislation.

Part B, a review of traditional management systems including ra’ui and ati-nga and options for integrating these within the Marae Moana framework, was authored and presented by Janet Maki.

An added bonus mid-way through the workshop was the launch of Dr Teina Rongo’s Coral Reef Survey. A PDF of the report can be found at www.tiscookislands.org
‘Green’ events in 2014

International Year of Family Farming
The United Nations (UN) has declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF).

The International Year of Family Farming aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focussing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development.

Earth Hour: 29 March
Millions of people across the world switch off lights for one hour to celebrate their commitment to the planet.

World Environment Day: 5 June 2014
World Environment Day was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1972, to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. It is an opportunity to raise awareness and promote action on national environmental issues.

World Oceans Day: 8 June 2014
An opportunity to raise global awareness of the challenges faced by the international community in connection with the oceans.

Lagoon Day Cook Islands: 17-19 July (dates to be confirmed)
In it’s 7th year, Lagoon Day is an annual environmental education expo.

Conservation Week: 7 - 14 September
Conservation Week activities are coordinated by the National Environment Service

Clean up the World: 19-21 September
Look out for news on how you can get involved here on Rarotonga.

World Animal Week: 4 - 10 October
The World Society for the Protection of Animals has designated from 4 - 10 October every year as World Animal Week. (www.wspa.org.nz)

World Food Day: 16 October
Observed every year around the world in honour of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in 1945.

World Fisheries Day: 21 November
World Fisheries day is celebrated every year throughout the world.

Recycle Week: 10 - 16 November

Suwarrow rat eradication: Initial results look promising

Suwarrow Atoll in the Northern Cook Islands is well documented as one of the more important bird islands in the Pacific Ocean. This is due to the large number and variety of seabirds which live and breed on the atoll. It is also a key staging point for a number of migratory birds that spend several months there on their way to and from their own nesting grounds in places as far away as Alaska. Because of its role in the life history of seabirds, and also because of the relatively pristine marine environment, the island was declared a National Park In 1978.

A team of six environmentalists travelled to Suwarrow to undertake a rat eradication exercise in mid 2013.

In follow up monitoring, rangers set traps and searched for rats for several months. Though no evidence of rats was found, it will be necessary to follow up a year or two from now. If any rats are found, DNA samples will be taken to determine if the rats are related to those that were there previously, meaning that the eradication exercise was not completely successful. However, if any rats are found to be from a different genetic strain, they are new introductions.

In order to prevent reinfestation there is a need for a biosecurity plan to try and minimise that risk. For this, the cooperation of all boats that visit the island will be needed.
Saturday is World Water Day. Although we don’t use water to generate energy in Rarotonga, we can take the time to remember how important water is to our daily life. In 2011, 768 million people did not use an improved source of drinking-water and 2.5 billion people did not use improved sanitation (www.unwater.org).

Sure we don’t have to walk miles across dry cracked earth to pump a bucket of precious water for our daily needs, but over the last few years it has become clear how much our fresh water resource is vulnerable to environmental change and human behaviour. The recent dry spells and reports of tainted water supply have highlighted this.

So what can we do to help care for our water supply? How about reporting or fixing leaking hoses, taps, or pipes; taking shorter showers; using only cleaning products that don’t contain phosphate; not putting products containing bleach or chlorine down the drain; keeping up septic system maintenance; keeping animals a good distance from waterways; keeping trees and plants around water-ways; considering erosion and soil run-off when developing land or planting ...

At TIS we aim to make every visitor welcome, although not always as welcome as Mr Hoppity pictured above!

Being a membership-based organisation committed to maintaining a healthy and beautiful environment our office provides just that. TIS was the first Cook Islands environmental NGO and was established in 1996 as a direct result of the downsizing of the Environment Service. Some of the foundation members, who felt some of the projects axed were worthwhile continuing for the benefit of our country, are still active TIS members today – Jolene, Ana and Jacqui.

We welcome all visitors whether they be after a cup of Kelvin’s “average” coffee or wanting some information on environmental, conservation, sustainable development issues or to talk about marine matters.

If you are not already a member and would like to become one, please drop in or phone us, or visit our website www.tiscookislands.org