

## Watershed Working Group

13 November 2013, 8:30-10am

*Dates to Remember:* Climate Change Working Group meeting Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at 9am, CHC Conference Room

*Attendees:* Joann Aquino (MOS), Erik Lash (CRM), Mark Dela Cruz (DEQ/NMC), Ben Cepeda (Forestry), Ike Cabrera (SWCD), Jihan Buniag, Ryan Okano, Derek Chambers, Kaitlin Mattos (DEQ)

### *Meeting Notes:*

- I. Opening, introductions
- II. Main speaker: Jihan Buniag – RARE Pride campaign launch
  - a. DEQ is conducting a social marketing campaign to get communities to take pride in natural resources, species and habitats that make their communities unique. The campaign focuses on proper land-clearing and planting native trees in Laolao Bay
  - b. Recently launched social media: outreach via Facebook, participation at community events (Labor Day, Let's Move Marianas, Sabalu Market, Trunk or Treat), and pledge boards
  - c. In addition to education, the campaign focuses on changing behavior
  - d. Barrier removal activities include cleaning sediment chambers in Laolao Bay area, tree planting, installing rain gardens and distributing manuals for land-owners to make their own
  - e. Derek recommended clearing sediment chambers in San Vicente that are clogged with grass and debris. Is it possible to ask construction companies or others with equipment to “adopt” storm drains for periodic cleaning? **\*\*There is a need to determine maintenance roadblocks and identify funding, personnel, equipment, etc. with DPW for maintaining storm drains!** (goat grazing was also discussed as an option, especially for Kagman)
  - f. Forestry and DEQ are going to visit the Laolao revegetation site to examine road access and the possibility of planting more (bigger?) trees in the bare areas. Additional maintenance of 2007-2011 planted trees is still required until they are large enough to outcompete tall grasses.
- III. Project updates:
  - a. NRCS did not attend due to a scheduled training. Kendal sent the message that NRCS is still very committed to following-up with any piggery related polluters discovered by the DEQ GPS mapping project. It is a key part of the NRCS mission to address the resource concerns that are generated by piggeries; especially those piggeries that are located too closely to sensitive water bodies.
    - i. Questions were asked about cost-share program, eligibility for lands that were not zoned for farming, etc. Perhaps NRCS would be able to do an educational presentation about their programs in the future?
  - b. CRM (Erik)
    - i. The Climate Change Working Group has its next meeting next week on Thursday, 11/21 at 9am at the CHC Conference Room to discuss the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and inundation scenarios
    - ii. Erik is working with EMO on generating LIDAR data for the entire CNMI to use as a base for developing hydrological models
  - c. MOS (Joann, sitting in for Henry who is off island)
    - i. The dog control program is moving forward with many traps and dogs held in the kennels. Individuals can call for a trap or for dog removal on their property by contacting the mayor's office. The program is in need of fuel to continue and increase its operations.

- ii. The Mayor's Office is responsible for road grading for all secondary roads (everything except Middle, Beach and Isa/Back Island Rd). The low-volume road training several years ago from USFS (described by Derek) was well-attended, but lack of equipment, money, time and some staff turnover has prevented all techniques for unpaved roads from being used consistently. Mayor's Office (working with DPW on equipment and paving, if needed) is an ideal lead for improving roads that are heavily impacting watershed issues.
  - d. Forestry (Ben)
    - i. There is still an interest in doing a West Takpochao watershed forest assessment. Ben and Kaity will work with Vic to get this scheduled.
    - ii. Would like to acknowledge 360 building owners for helping Forestry care for trees there.
  - e. SWCD (Ike)
    - i. The group is trying to amend the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to create one for the entire CNMI, to unite and improve efforts on Rota and Tinian with Saipan.
    - ii. Lobbying for the 70 million gallon water tank and pump for the Kagman Watershed Project is happening now in Congress and \$6M may be budgeted for 2015
- IV. Garapan CAP status report
  - a. Signed by the directors of CRM, DFW, DEQ, digital copies are available
  - b. An MOA between partner agencies was recommended so all involved can have a more firm line in striving towards the actions to improve the watershed. This MOA would be approved by the agency/organizational heads and then signed in the coming months.
- V. Next meeting
  - a. February 12, 2013, Wednesday at 8:30am
  - b. Topic: CNMI Forestry programs and projects (Ben Cepeda or Vic?) -- tentative
  - c. Future recommendations:
    - i. Watershed Assessment strategies – CRM may be able to do hydrology side of this
    - ii. NRCS EQIP program, details, eligibility, recruitment,
    - iii. DEQ/CRM MMT 10-year data analysis
    - iv. NPS: Regional aquatic ecologist about data and monitoring programs