

## Watershed Working Group

5/3/17

8:30am – 11:00am

BECQ Main Conference Room

### Next meeting:

Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Attendees

Robbie Greene, Kathy Yuknavage, Ariele Baker, Karen Samiano, Carlos Ketebengan, Joe Ito, Rodney Camacho, Katie Graziano (BECQ), John Furey, Andre Kozij (Apaseem), Dana Okano (NOAA).

#### 8:30-8:45

Introductions

#### 8:45 – 9:30

**Presentation:** GIS Application of the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Robbie Greene, BECQ

(see Powerpoint attached to email or on Watershed Working Group website:

<http://cnmicoralreef.com/education-outreach/watershed-working-group.htm>)

#### 9:30-10:00

#### *Roundtable Updates*

##### **John Furey (Apaseem)**

Revisiting the “Island Ecology and Resource Management” textbook discussion, which was brought up in a previous meeting. The book is more than 15 years out of date, and needs an update. All the books are circulated in the public school system, and have been used for the past 11 years. In December of last year it was officially adopted by the public school system. John just got an update that it is being used in the NRM program at NMC, it’s required for 6 classes, but they lost 600 books in Soudelor so they need new books. When it was first developed, John led the team and wrote the grants. It is important to update it again, but the challenge is building it into work plans.

Apaseem was working on a major project for Kensington Hotel. Large proposal to put aqua park into the lagoon. Team did biological assessment work, water quality management, monitoring and mitigation program. The major focus of water quality is turbidity, but it became too expensive to read. Apaseem is no longer involved with the project. Kensington is working with BECQ permitting and water quality.

5/4, 6-8 pm, American memorial park: Disney Corporation, Marianas Ava Fauna Conservation Group, , capturing birds from saipan and bringing to zoos and northern islands, to keep wildlife populations going in case of brown tree snake.

### **Lyza Johnson (BECQ)**

Seagrass resilience assessment is in full swing. Sampled 20 sites in the lagoon. Lots of samples to process. Parameters: water quality, others.

There are some ongoing outside projects – Jeff Meter got funding to redo coral reef resilience work, to resurvey sites and see if the resilience assessment was accurate.

There is a group coming from Miami to do QPCR training so that we can pull out human indicators from animals.

Another group funded a stable isotope study in the lagoon, which will help source tracking for land based sources of pollution.

Lady Carolina- grounded out in the lagoon. Some progress in getting that off the reef using the Paul Russ settlement. Mitigation for the Paul Russ ship grounding in 2014. There's also a navy salvage ship that could maybe help. Becky Furey (MINA) got the marine debris grant. Getting it off the reef soon!

Site restoration will be happening this summer at Paul Russ ship grounding site– artificial reef modules and transplants from other sites, like Puerto Rico park dump site. There will be long term monitoring.

### **Kathy Yuknavage (BECQ)**

Tourism management – red flags at the Grotto. MVA can certify tour groups. Meetings ongoing – contact Kathy if you want to be involved. [kathyuknavage@becq.gov.mp](mailto:kathyuknavage@becq.gov.mp)

### **Dana Okano (NOAA)**

This is Dana's last Watershed Working Group meeting ☹️ She will be leaving Saipan in July (?), and does not know yet who her replacement will be.

Talakhaya work and funding for sediment study that we were doing is coming to an end. Contractor will submit final report in early June, which will be shared with the WWG.

Horsley Witten – engineering firm– was on contract to provide technical support for permitting staff. Jonathon Arriola has made really good use of them. That funding will expire in September, but this year we expanded it out to other jurisdictions including the Caribbean so we might actually run out before September. If you have any NPS or stormwater review work, please reach out to Anne Kitchell at Horsely Witten: [akitchell@horsleywitten.com](mailto:akitchell@horsleywitten.com) or contact Dana: [dana.okano@noaa.gov](mailto:dana.okano@noaa.gov)

### **Rodney Camacho (BECQ)**

Working on new access database so it's easier to upload data to EPA.

### **Arielle Baker (BECQ)**

Just hired a new part-time shoreline tech (Karen), who will be here for one year.

Saipan Lagoon Use Management Plan (SLUMP) – Last week, there was a 2-day workshop to update the SLUMP, which has not been updated since 2014. Consultants from Horsley Witten (HW) came out and had a stakeholder meeting and public meeting after work hours. HW will make management recommendations, which will be disseminated to decision makers. It incorporated input from marine operators to develop some sort of ‘zoning’ of the lagoon based on thresholds of use capacity. Also incorporating long term biological monitoring data to make recommendations about recreational use as it relates to biological communities. There was significant reference to water quality concerns, but it was deemed to be a separate issue that won’t be covered in the SLUMP. Recommendations made through the final report may be adopted through regulatory process.

### **Katie Graziano (BECQ)**

On Rota, they are prepped for the Talakhaya planting season with all vetiver grasses propagated, fire field surveillance agents are currently stationed out in the field. There was already one fire last month in the conservation area, but we haven’t been able to map it yet.

There is a new NOAA Coral Reef Management Fellow working on Rota (Malcolm Johnson, [malcolm.johnson89@gmail.com](mailto:malcolm.johnson89@gmail.com)) focusing on watershed management in Talakhaya. For now, he is finishing up a stream sediment study with Horsley Witten. As Dana mentioned, results from that study should be published in July.

## **Results from WWG Survey**

A few months ago, I sent out a survey asking about the format and utility of the Watershed Working Group. The survey can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeIWWxusTnt1RZkCI6kfJmZ\\_tMujq0F4tLH5nPZVT3mh\\_alA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeIWWxusTnt1RZkCI6kfJmZ_tMujq0F4tLH5nPZVT3mh_alA/viewform)

I received five responses. It is still open if anybody has some follow-up thoughts since the meeting.

The general consensus is that the current format of the WWG (sharing updates and presentations between various groups/agencies) is valuable and good. The ‘outcome’ or ‘output’ that we achieve is the sharing of information, which should not be discounted. There may be an opportunity in the future to rally behind a certain project or issue, but focusing on a product within the WWG is not necessary and maybe could be counterproductive. The WWG acts primarily as a place to freely share information, and a separate ‘task force’ could be developed to tackle a specific project if it arises.

Thanks to everyone who responded and participated in the discussion – I very much appreciate the feedback and the opportunity to keep the WWG on task in a way that is useful to everyone.