

Watershed Working Group

March 11, 2020: 9-1030am – BECQ 2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees:

Sixto Igisomar (Senate) Pedro Tuedla (Forestry) Erin Derrington (OPD) Manuel Camacho (OPD) Larry Maurin (DEQ/DEQ) Pamela Sablan (NRCS) Ian Bubb (BECQ) Rich Salas (BECQ) Art Charfauros (BECQ) Mary Fem Urena (BECQ) Olivia Tenorio (BECQ) Mallory Muna (DCRM) Kelsey McClellan (DCRM) Robbie Greene (NOAA) Becky Skeelee (KOA) Kathy Yuknavage (Sphere inc) Lee Tenuria (MOS) Jonathan Arriola (DEQ) Travis Spaeth (BECQ) Naomi Scantor (MVA) Sheila Babauta (21st Leg) Carlos Ketebengng (BECQ)

Dates to Remember:

- March 13, 2020: House Joint Resolution 21 (regarding military activities in the CNMI) being presented in the House Chambers.

Meeting Notes:

I. Opening and introductions:

What is the watershed working group?

It's a form for people and agencies to get together and collaborate on natural resource work, by grouping funding and personnel together while also sharing expertise and local insight. We can coordinate these resources together to get more done. Improve synergy of natural resource management within the CNMI.

Housecleaning

Have to update the MoA every four years, but hasn't been updated since 2013. Updating the signature page will be important so that we know who is signing on from all the different agencies since it hasn't occurred since 2013. The 2013 version says the meetings are quarterly, but people were meeting every other month, or even once a month. Hopefully momentum will build and we can see how often people want to meet. Right now we will set a baseline for a quarterly meeting. Notes will be published online, and emailed out ASAP after the meeting.

II. Speaker(s):

Becky Skeelee – Koa Consulting

Watershed Workshop Update

Garapan is going to be the first one done by mid to late April - May. Done with Seachange consulting under TNC. Loalao has a CAP as well, being done by Horsley Witten. Hopefully done by late fall. Achugao is brand new with no CAP, doing it from scratch with Horsley Whitten. Hopefully done October 1st but maybe end of year. In January 2020 both of these consulting groups came out to do field surveys.

Achugao watershed boundary will be changing, partly because of drainage patterns, and partly due to different management challenges. Made sense to shift southern boundary north. Forestry update, saying that they have planted thousands of trees within the Auchgao watershed. They are studying planting bananas in order to mitigate against fires.

Laolao is focused on sub-watershed of northern watershed. Concentration of projects and ground-truthing within the area. However, workshop wanted to expand out of this sub-watershed and boundaries may be shifting.

Garapan, two different maps to determine watershed boundaries. One including Fishing Base and one excluded it. Need to determine whether fishing base should be included within the Garapan watershed. There are a lot of similarities of fishbase with the Garapan area so it would make sense to include, plus there are a lot of use pressures which would make it nice to include in priority watershed planning. On the forestry side, they planted trees to help with erosion near drainage. Overall group seems to want to include Fishing Base.

Garapan specific, three separate categories – that have specific objectives that want to occur within the next 5 years, and then actions to meet the objectives.

Categories 1 – Habitat and natural resource management

Objective 1 – Minimum of two affordable spay & neuter clinics by 2025. Will be coordinate by the mayor's office

Objective 2 – invasive species BMPs – lead by forestry. New NFWF grant will help set up wetland oriented projects

Objective 3 – DFW hunting fishing and research permits updated with legal guidance. UH has a legal fellow program.

Objective 4 – CRM permitting regulations updated and reviewed with legal guidance. Soil erosion permitting should be put into the wish list for this objective. Led by BECQ

Category 2 – Water quality

Objective 9 – 2025 – 20 green infrastructure projects implemented through a pilot program. Watershed coordinator and EPA water quality may be taking lead. However, lead my really depend on who is the one getting the largest amount of funding.

Objective 10 by 2025 4 public restroom facilities will be open and maintained. Parks and rec should be heavily involved and are currently fixing the restroom in Peace Park. OPD-Garapan Revitalization can put this on their radar for funding. OPD- natural resources as well

Objective 12 – 20205 25% of illicit discharge has been eliminated. CUC would have to be involved. MEENA finished their reporting which includes looking at illicit discharge. CUC already working on this project and were active in the discussion at the workshop. (Engineers will need approval to come to meetings such as this one.) Might want to increase it to 50%. Will need more coordination to work out lead

Objective 13 – FOG disposal program is established and implemented. CUC and BEH. Kanoa uses oils to heat their water. Also a couple of laundry mats.

Cat 3 – development

Objective 6 – zoning. BECQ

Objective 7 – central portal for GIS. GIS working group. BECQ and potentially OPD.

III. Project updates:

OPD – NFWF funding approved for wetlands and coral restoration. Pilot projects for out planting corals, putting in reef balls. Have a terrestrial and water group. Collecting water quality data. Lots of data collection and a job position.

BECQ-DEQ – Microbial source tracking report now available:

http://www.deq.gov.mp/resources/files/Saipan%20MSTdata%20report%20to%20CNMI-BECQ%20by%20NOAA-AOML_2017-2018_update-Jan2020.pdf

April 18th environmental awareness day.

IV. Next meeting:

TBD, June 2020