

Watershed Working Group

August 3, 2021: 1 – 3pm; BECQ 2nd Floor Conference Room & via Zoom

Attendees:

Ilan Bubb (DCRM – Coral Fellow), Zachary Williams (DCRM), Mary Fem Urena (DCRM), Steve McKagan (NOAA), Wayne Dawe (MINA), Robbie Greene (NOAA), Kylie Hasegawa (DCRM), Becky Furey (MINA), Larry Maurin (DEQ), Pedro Tudela (DLNR-Forestry), Zabrina Shai (DEQ), Rich Salas (DCRM), Jovahna Taitingfong (DCRM), Seamus Harrison (DCRM), Kelsey McClellan (PCRP), James Manglona (DLNR-Forestry)

Dates to Remember:

- Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal Hazards 101 – Virtual Workshop
 - Aug. 25, 2021, 9–11am
- Comments on the Proposed Amendments to the CNMI Water Quality Standards
 - Comments due by 5pm ChST on Friday, Sept. 3, 2021
 - A public hearing will be held at 5pm ChST on Thursday, Sept. 2, 2021 at the 2nd Floor BECQ Conference Room (or via GoogleMeet: <https://meet.google.com/nwe-qkyw-jco>)

Speakers

[See PowerPoint slides linked via WWG page]

Opening and introductions

<https://dcrm.gov.mp/our-programs/water-quality-and-watershed-management/watershed-working-group/>

I. Zachary Williams, DCRM Watershed Coordinator (zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp)

- Tanapag Raingarden
 - Renovations in April and June
 - Enhanced drainage with plastic-lined trench
 - Planted with native spike sedge
 - Downspout at main office building connected directly to raingarden
 - Planted with native wetland plant species and useful medicinal/food plants
 - Funding and labor from DCRM, DEQ-Water Quality and DEQ-Earth Moving
 - Some plant mortality, but overall high survival; will continue monitoring to inform future raingarden plant selections
- Watershed Outreach
 - Ocean Fair was a big success.
 - More agency participation next year, please!
 - Camp Magalahi (via NMC CREES and 4H)
 - Coral and watersheds outreach on Saipan, Tinain, and Rota
- Achugao Upland Reforestation Project (DOI-funded)
 - Final siting underway
 - Watershed Coordinator will be reaching out to relevant agencies (e.g. DFW)

II. Mary Fem Urena, DCRM Coastal Resources Planner (murena@dcrm.gov.mp)

- Better Buildings Update
 - New incentives to minimize coastal hazards
 - Implements and maintains on-site stormwater management practices that collect from off-site source and treat or contain at least an additional 10% of projects total stormwater runoff volume based on the 25-year 24-hour duration storm event

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- Implements and maintains at least 30% of pervious surface area or green infrastructure elements
- Renewable energy source supplying 20% or more of a project's electricity
- Evaluation of current and future risks must consider best available science (DCRM-adopted coastal flood scenarios) when available
- Incorporating Better Building practices, including GI and NBS, into current and future development through design and retrofit can prepare us for worsening climate impacts
- Identifying green infrastructure as a mitigation activity under the hazard mitigation plan can improve this effort
- Increasing our own agencies' technical capacity through education to implement Better Buildings practices for sustainable development
- Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal Hazards 101 – Virtual Workshop
 - Aug. 25, 2021, 9–11am
 - [See flyer on WWG page]

III. Larry Maurin, DEQ Water Quality Surveillance & Nonpoint Source Branch Manager (larry.maurin@becq.gov.mp)

- Proposed Amendments to CNMI Water Quality Standards
 - Comprehensive review of Water Quality Standards every three years
 - Highlights of Proposed Amendments for 2021 include:
 - Increasing clarity and consistency with federal programs
 - Clarifying anti-degradation requirements
 - Clarifying certain water quality criteria when ambient conditions exceed numeric criteria
 - Extending nitrate criteria to fresh surface waters
 - Clarify work stoppage periods during coral spawning
 - Establishing water quality criteria for radioactivity
 - Revising procedures for 401 Water Quality Certifications
 - Expanding enforcement procedures
 - Public comment period is open on amendments. Comments are due by 5pm on Friday, September 3, 2021.
 - See full Proposed Amendments published in an addendum to the June 2021 edition of the Commonwealth Register <https://cnmilaw.org/reg.php>
 - A hearing will be held on the second floor BECQ conference room at 5pm September 2, 2021.
 - The public hearing will be accessible online via GoogleMeet at the following link: <https://meet.google.com/nwe-qkyw-jco>

IV. Robbie Green, Pacific Coastal Research & Planning

- Updated USFS CNMI Forest Inventory & Analysis
 - 37 Forest Plots inventoried in 2015
 - Metrics regarding structure, composition, disturbance, etc...
 - FIA Database can be downloaded (not user friendly!)
 - Goal to increase frequency of monitoring (& possible plot additions)
 - Potential for other agencies to contribute?
- Updated Micronesia Challenge Terrestrial Measures

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- <https://mcterrestrialmeasures.org/#/mariana>
- Dendy et.al summary in *Micronesica*
 - <https://micronesica.org/sites/default/files/dendyetal2020.pdf>
- Updated 2020–2030 CNMI Forest Action Plant (FAP)
 - Priority Issues:
 - Urban Forest Sustainability
 - Coral Reef Protection
 - Wetland Conservation
 - Freshwater Quality
 - Native Flora & Fauna
 - Coming soon!
 - DLNR Forestry is primary contact

V. Pedro Tudela & James Manglona, DLNR-Forestry

- Talakhaya Revegetation Project
 - USDA-USFW funding → native species only
 - Installed fencing to create deer exclusion zones for sapling trees

Roundtable Discussion

Zachary Williams (DCRM)

- NOAA-funded position will open next year for a fulltime “Rota Watershed Technician”
- Rep. Sheila Babauta looking for small projects to fund; \$5,000 available for projects in Precinct 4

Rich Salas (DCRM)

- Wetland delineation (USACE methodology) training in December
 - Stay tuned for more info!

Kelsey McClellan (PCRP)

- Beach Road shoreline study is up and the project area is confined to north of The Shack to the south of Fishing Base. Working with Horsey Witten Group to protect Beach Rd. from erosion
 - <https://www.pacificcrp.org/beach-rd-shoreline-study>

Pedro Tudelo (DLNR-Forestry)

- DLNR Forestry awarded grant for Laolao Bay watershed reforestation (focus on hillside stabilization)
 - Looking for volunteers for Laolao cleanup (scheduling coming soon)