



EBM KUBULAU BULLETIN



VOL. 11. NOVEMBER 2009

Ni sa bula vinaka! Welcome to the eleventh edition of the WCS EBM Kubulau Bulletin. The bulletin brings together news and results from ongoing activities by the Wildlife Conservation Society within the Kubulau area.

Ecotourism business training in the Kubulau

The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) in partnership with the Fiji Ministry of Tourism and supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society sponsored 34 participants (three from each village) to attend a course facilitated by Viliame Koyamaibole from University of the South Pacific-Regional Centre for Continuing and Community education (USP-RCCCE). The group gathered in Kilaka, Kubulau for one week, and took part in the intensive one week 'Setting up an Eco-Tourism Business' and 'Tour Guide' training course. The participants from each village group formed an introductory team that developed a specific business concept to complement the marine and terrestrial conservation efforts in the area.

The concepts were designed to suit the particular natural resources, culture, and infrastructure of each village, and the range of ideas included bird watching excursions, the establishment of a forest eco-lodge, and the creation of a village tour with Fijian folklore dances and stories. Participants gave the training glowing reviews and are excited to bring their knowledge and business plans back to their villages. Tui Kubulau is hopeful that through these activities, cultural rejuvenation will occur as the next generation learn from their elder families about their traditions and culture in order to share this with the guests, for example through traditional meke, song, and bure building practices.

The course was planned to meet 4 outcomes: (1) providing basis for continuing education for community members; (2) creating employment opportunities; (3) creating tourism awareness; and (4) training community workers/developers. "The training was offered to the youths of Kubulau as a way to offer them a path back to education. They did not have to have



Participants of the training practicing first aid.

completed Form 6 but after finishing the full 5 modules of this course they will be able to use that as their qualification to apply to USP for a foundation degree course," commented Heidi Williams, field manager for CORAL.

"We funded these initial two modules, and the hierarchy council approved that the 34 participants could then apply for Namena Scholarships to help them complete the next three if they wish to continue," said Heidi Williams. "We hope that the community sees yet another reason to conserve their precious resources as a result of this project. By looking after their environment, they provide something that tourists are willing to pay to see, something that the rest of the world has lost"

The community tourism efforts in Kubulau will be aided by the installation of the near-shore mooring buoys, which will allow tourist vessels to access the villages more easily. Dive tourists will now be able to meet and directly support the traditional owners of the reefs they value so highly.

KEY EBM MESSAGES:

Preservation of functional integrity of Fiji's ecosystems through community based management.

- *Successful EBM relies on cross sectoral planning and management*
- *Inland and lowland communities need to manage resources together*
- *EBM protects habitat for all stages of life*
- *Improving land and fishing practices helps protect natural resources*
- *Public health and livelihoods depend on environmental health*

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KUBULAU MEETINGS UPDATE

In October, representatives from the government departments and Bua provincial office met with chiefs and *turaga-ni-koros* of the Kubulau district to discuss the development issues in Kubulau, *Bose-ni-tikina*. "This meeting is held twice every year and is a platform for discussing development of the district. It gives communities a platform to inform provincial officers and government reps on issues which the communities face" commented Paulo Kolikata, Chairman of the Kubulau Resource Management Committee (KRMCM).

In September, the *turaga-ni-koros* and the Tui Kubulau had also met with KRMCM

during the *Bose Vanua* meeting to endorse the: (1) roles of the KRMCM as stated in the ridge-to-reef plan; (2) chair and co-chairs of the various sub-committees; and (3) roles and responsibilities of the sub-committees.

Since the endorsement of the sub-committees, the chairs and co-chairs together with the *turaga-ni-koros* have been recruiting community representatives to sit in the sub-committees. "The sub-committee members will be finalized by the 24th of November" said Paulo Kolikata, chairman of the KRMCM. "After the members have been finalized, each sub-

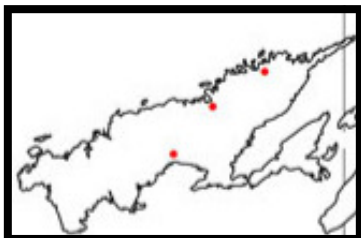
committee will then start the process of implementing the actions which have been prioritized during the implementation workshop held in August" added Mr. Kolikata.



Paulo during the Kubulau ridge-to-reef management planning workshop

'SLASH AND BURN' IS BAD FOR THE ECOSYSTEM

THE GOAL OF ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT IS TO MAINTAIN AN ECOSYSTEM IN A HEALTHY, PRODUCTIVE AND RESILIENT CONDITION SO THAT IT CAN PROVIDE THE SERVICES HUMANS WANT AND NEED.



(Top) Distribution of tree frogs *Platymantis vitensis*, *Ulla*, on Vanua Levu (source www.naturefiji.org). (Bottom left) Tree frogs on a Fiji 15 cent Stamp. (Bottom right) Tree frog, one of the two species of endemic frogs of Fiji, are found in the forest of Kubulau (source www.naturefiji.org). They are listed as near threatened under IUCN redlist. These frogs are threatened by habitat loss on these islands, particularly due to the increase in conversion of native forest to plantations.

During the Kubulau management planning workshop conducted in February 2009, a lot of the community participants identified slash and burn clearing as one of the major threats to the terrestrial habitats. Slash and burn cutting is practiced for clearing of plots for agricultural purposes. This practice is however detrimental to terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Below is a list of the negative effects of slashing and burning:

- Deforestation: When practiced by large populations, or when fields are not given sufficient time for vegetation to grow back, there is a temporary or permanent loss of forest cover.
- Erosion: When fields are slashed, burned, and cultivated next to each other in rapid succession, roots and temporary water storages are lost and unable to prevent nutrients from leaving the area permanently.
- Nutrient Loss: For the same reasons, fields may gradually lose the

fertility they once had. The result may be desertification, a situation in which land is infertile and unable to support growth of any kind.

- Biodiversity Loss: When plots of land area cleared, the various plants and animals that lived there are swept away. If a particular area is the only one that holds a particular species, slashing and burning could result in extinction for that species. Because slash and burn agriculture is often practiced in tropical regions where biodiversity is extremely high, endangerment and extinction may be magnified.

The negative aspects above are interconnected, and when one happens, typically another happens also. Therefore, to safe guard Kubulau against these impacts, we should take care when burning dried vegetation.

HONEY MAKING WORKSHOP

The Mainstreaming Rural Development Initiative (MORDI) team organized a two day workshop in Nakorovou village in Kubulau to teach participants how to make honey and keep bees.

The 13 participants from eight villages were encouraged to keep honey bees in order to: 1) increase their income; 2) better their children's futures; and 3) to enhance self sufficiency.

The MORDI beekeeping workshop is just one of three (including cattle farming and poultry farming) to take place during the two days and aims to bring resources, knowledge and motivation to all those who participate.

Each hive is initially stocked with a swarm of 2000 honey bees consisting of one queen bee, drones (males) and worker bees. In four months this population is expected to increase ten fold becoming a colony of 60,000 bees. By this time the hive will be ready for its first harvest. The hives can be harvested four times a year.



(Top left) Transferring bees to a new hive. (Top right) Participants assembling a new hive. (Bottom left) Participants observing bees around them. (Bottom right) Participants of the two day workshop organised by MORDI.

WATER CATCHMENT ACT

A water catchment refers to the total land (and including the streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes) from which water runs off to supply a particular location in a freshwater system.

Water catchment areas are an important source of drinking water and should be preserved. Upstream deforestation makes the catchment susceptible to erosion: heavy siltation promotes natural disasters such as flood. Therefore, proper management of the upper catchment is important for human livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.

Under the Fijian legislation, certain areas can be set aside as catchment areas for the purpose ensuring protection of important drinking water catchment.

Under the Water Supply Act, where the minister considers it desirable that any area of land or water should be a catchment area for the purposes of a water supply, he/she may give notice in the gazette and in *Na Mata* of the intention to declare catchment area as protected.

According to the Act, such notices shall:

(1) specify the area to be affected; (2) state that the effect of declaration as a catchment area will be to prohibit any act causing pollution of any water therein; (3) specify a date, not being less than 2 months after the publication of the later of such notices, within which objection may be made.

Where an objection is received within the specified time for making objection, the Minister may, by notice in the gazette, declare the area or any part thereof to be a catchment area.

Any owner, lessee or licensee of land who suffers loss or damage by reason of the inclusion of such land in a catchment area: shall be entitled to compensation for such loss or damage and may recover the same by action against the crown.

In Kubulau, the Rotary club and PCDF had started the submission of getting the catchment gazetted as catchment area however, this was never completed. Currently, WCS is trying to get this process re-started so that future drinking source of water can be preserved for Kubulau communities.



Water for life: (Above) Raijeli enjoying a bath. (Below) Dinuku preparing water for cleaning the dishes and community hall during February 2009 management planning workshop held in Namalata.

FIJI ECOSYSTEM BASED
MANAGEMENT (EBM) = HEALTHY
PEOPLE, PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

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OUT!

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Merremia peltata is a vine that strangles vegetation and invades forest strands (source www.mnre.gov.ws).

ONGOING AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Nov 09**-Community monitoring using the FLMMA techniques.
- **Nov 09**-Release of 11th Kubulau EBM bulletin
- **Dec 09**-FLMMA AGM in Suva.
- **24 Dec 09—04 Jan 10**— WCS office closed for festive season
- **Jan 10**-Kubulau consultation on terrestrial reserve gazettal.

KNOW YOUR INVASIVE: 'MERREMIA'

Merremia peltata is known in Fiji by many names: *veliyana*, *viliyawa*, *wa bula*, *wa damu*, *wiliao*, *wiliviwa*. According to the Global Invasive Species Database, merremia is an ornamental plant cultivated and naturalized in many countries.

Merremia can be found growing in agricultural areas, natural forests, planted forests, grasslands, riparian zones, disturbed areas, shrublands, and urban areas. *Merremia* crawls up and over forest tree species and thickets forming either a ground cover or canopy species. It smothers and strangles other vegetation.

Merremia peltata is a vine that strangles vegetation and invades forest strands. It may provide rapid ground cover following land disturbance reducing erosion and nutrient loss. There is debate over the extent to which external factors such as cyclones and land clearing drive the invasiveness of the species. It may be a successional component of regenerating forest in its native range. Disturbance thus appears to be an ecological contributing factor to the invasive process for this species.

Control:

Since it requires full sunlight, minimizing disturbance will inhibit growth. Hand control (physical control) is labor intensive and difficult due to resprouting and rooting of stem fragments. However, it is readily grazed by cattle, which can be used to control the weed. Non-grazed areas could be slashed or hand weeded.

ANY QUESTIONS...?

Please send your questions and letters to the EBM Bulletin Editorial Team, using the contact details above. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is Monday 4th January 2010. Please contact the Editor for further details.

TAQOMAKI NI NODA VEIKABULA



The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is a U.S. based international NGO, with conservation programs all around the world, including Fiji. Over the past century, the WCS has worked to establish more than 130 parks and protected areas on land and at sea as well as working on threatened species. WCS works to save wildlife and wild places by understanding and resolving the critical problems that threaten key species and large, wild ecosystems around the world.

Our "Ecosystem-based Management" work is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which started in 2004. It is led by WCS, with the partners of the World Wide Fund for Nature - Fiji, Wetlands International, and the University of the South Pacific. A second EBM site is at Macuata, to the north. This newsletter focuses on the work led by WCS at Kubulau.

