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Humatak – Pohnpei Youth in Conservation Learning Exchange

July 26 – August 1, 2013

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GOAL: The Umatac Coral Reef Ambassadors will be inspired and motivated to become lifelong and educated ambassadors of conservation.

OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce Pohnpei community conservation practices (traditional and contemporary practices);
- Provide hands-on with marine resources;
- Provide venue for youth exchange to take place; and
- Enjoy Pohnpei marine attractions.

Executive Summary

The Humatak – Pohnpei Youth in Conservation Learning Exchange is a partnership project between The Conservation Society of Pohnpei and the Humatak Community Foundation to inspire and motivate our youth to become lifelong and educated ambassadors of conservation. This is the first half of the learning exchange and the second half will comprise of Pohnpei Youth visiting Guam.

A total of fourteen (14) participants represented the Umatac Coral Reef Ambassador in Pohnpei. Ten (10) Ambassadors and four (4) Parent and Teacher Chaperones comprised the total delegation. The initial days planned were from July 26 – 30, 2013, however, due to cancellation and delays of the airline flight schedule, the delegation had a two-day extension to continue the learning exchange.

This learning exchange is made possible by the funding support from The Nature Conservancy, the Humatak Community Foundation, parents of the Ambassadors, and the Humatak Community.

This report will highlight the activities that carried out the Humatak – Pohnpei Youth in Conservation Learning Exchange Objectives towards accomplishing the learning exchange's intended goal.

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Introduction to Pohnpei

The Umatac Coral Reef Ambassadors (UMCRA) were welcomed by Pohnpei Youth at the airport and at the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) office. CSP Director Eugene Joseph welcomed everyone to CSP and briefed the group of the week's itinerary. Director Joseph provided a short presentation of the mission and activities of the CSP. The Ambassadors toured the main population center, Kolonia Village and visited the Kapingamarangi village for crafts and woodwork. A welcoming feast and *Sakau* ceremony, hosted by Willy Kostka and family capped off the first day.



Terrestrial/Cultural Activities

Terrestrial and cultural activities included the tour of Kepirohi waterfalls, walking trail to the Village of Enipein from the mangrove coast, and tour of Nan Madol ruins. The activities were interactive as the youth bonded with the hosting community.

In the village of Enipein, a cultural presentation of traditional dances and *Sakau* ceremony were experienced by the Ambassadors. The community youth of Enipein had an opportunity to bond with the Ambassadors during the ceremony and at the swimming hole at the river.



A special guided tour of Nan Madol ruins by Dr. Mauricio intrigued and fascinated the Ambassadors that they expressed the tour of Nan Madol ruins as their favorite Pohnpei cultural experience.

A Pohnpeian dinner feast and *Sakau* ceremony were hosted by the community of Sapwalap. This get-together provided a venue for the Ambassadors to meet with the community. The community youth entertained the Ambassadors with their modern interpretive dance.



Reef/Mangrove Activities



Reef activities included a visit and snorkel to Black Coral Island or *Kepara* Island preserve and *Lengar* Island preserve as well as the mangrove areas in the coast leading to the village of *Enipein*. The Ambassadors were briefed about the islands and the preserve around them.

The Ambassadors had the opportunity to engage with CSP on the discussion of preserves in areas that are most needed to protect spawning activities and other species. Snorkeling activities around the preserves provided first-hand view of the results of preserved areas. Ambassadors expressed their appreciation to seeing the diverse marine life in the preserve areas. The snorkeling activities provided the Ambassadors the skill and confidence to be in different marine environments as their home base reef environment in Humatak village.



The Ambassadors toured the mangrove areas leading up to the village of Enipein. This is a unique experience for the Ambassadors for they are not familiar with mangrove habitat environment. This opportunity is rare for the Ambassadors.

Conclusion

The Humatak- Pohnpei Youth in Conservation Learning Exchange is UCRA's second learning exchange and we are grateful that this type of teaching and learning opportunity is afforded to our youth. The objectives to provide unique teaching and learning activities, engagement with youth, and providing the inspiration and motivation for our youth have been accomplished and as this type of "natural" teaching and learning continues, we will definitely accomplish our goal for our youth to be ***inspired and motivated to become lifelong and educated ambassadors of conservation.***

Although we do not expect immediate outcomes overnight, our indicators such as feedback forums, focus group discussion, and group advocacy are clearly evident in our participating youth. The Ambassadors provided feedback discussion and presented their experiences to all Pohnpei conservation stakeholders in attendance (Pohnpei Lt. Governor, Pohnpei State Legislator, CSP Chairman, etc.). The Ambassadors expressed their affection and embrace Pohnpei's culture and heritage and through group discussions, the group recognized that conservation is not a new-fangled institution, but a practice that is ingrained into our culture and heritage and it is up to us to identify and embrace the importance of those practices for today's evolving lifestyle.

