

Project Title:

Building and promoting community stewardship to take ownership and responsibility in managing their resources from land to reefs

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NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP)

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Several environment and resource management agencies recognized the differences in interest, use and users, and knowledge of the marine environment and its resources from various groups of people in a community. Therefore to ensure stakeholder participation, the use of participatory tools for information gathering, planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation is very important.

Participatory, Learning and Action (PLA) is a community action program that engages all sectors of the community, especially women and youth. In addition, PLA will guarantee the sustainability of development by ensuring wider participation and capacity building at the community level. Having people involved in the information gathering, developing, and implementation will give people responsibility and accountability for their action in resource use. PLA aids in gathering information using a diverse range of activities and methods. It cuts through social and traditional barriers like age, sex and status hindrances. In addition, it is a way of building capacity at the community level and exposing potential of the people involved. It is successful because it involves the entire community, ensuring that everyone has a voice and that their ideas are incorporated into the process of creating a community action plans. It gives the community a sense of ownership over their action plans and builds their capacity as managers of their own environment.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the PLA workshop in Faga'alu

On June 24th and 25th, 2011, a PLA community workshop was carried out by NOAA PIRO field staff with support from partners of the Land-based Sources of Pollution Local Action Strategy (LBSP-LAS) group. Approximately 15 local resource managers from the LBSP-LAS group assisted in facilitating the workshop in Faga'alu. The objectives of the workshop are clearly laid out below with the underlying goal of developing, with the village, a village-based watershed plan for Faga'alu to effectively manage the resources in Faga'alu.

Objective of the PLA workshop:

1. To raise awareness and build the capacity of village community to enable them to undertake specific environmental management functions within a sustainability framework;
2. To collect baseline information to assist in the development of a Village Watershed Action Plan;
3. To build partnership and collaboration between the village, resource agencies and outside partners;
4. To gain, enhance, and promote a better understanding of the watershed issues and resources in Faga'alu;
5. To build community stewardship of their environment and resources.

PLA process to engage the village in planning

The process for Faga’alu was undertaken in multiple efforts by NOAA PIRO field staff, the LBSP-LAS partners, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in collaboration with the village community. The community outreaches and PLA community workshop were conducted by the LBSP-LAS and NOAA PIRO. Focus group meetings with the Village Watershed Committee (VWC) using the Conservation Action Planning (CAP) tools were facilitated by TNC with support from NOAA PIRO field staff. The partners from the LBSP-LAS group are based in American Samoa, while the TNC members travelled to American Samoa from Palau to assist in the project. The following is the PLA community process utilized for the implementation of the project in Faga’alu village:

1. Initial meeting with the village Point of Contact – village Mayor
2. Community Education and Outreach campaign targeting youth groups
3. PLA Community Workshop
4. Selection of Village Watershed Committee (VWC)
5. CAP meetings with VWC (facilitate by TNC)
6. Development of Faga’alu Village Watershed Management Plan
7. Internal and External Review of village plan
8. Presentation of final plan by VWC to the Faga’alu village council of chiefs
9. Implementation and Evaluation



Land-based Sources of Pollution-LAS partners



Faga’alu community outreach



Faga’alu community outreach



Group presentation on Resource Mapping

PLA tools and activities

The participants to the workshop were grouped in four small mixed groups of men, women, and children. Each group had a facilitator from the LBSP-LAS group to assist them with the activities and discussions. The activities that were carried out during the workshop are listed below with a brief description of each one in the order that they were facilitated during the workshop.

1. Collective Vision

Each group was asked to develop a simple statement that could summarize what they would like to see of their watershed and resources in the future. The group was given 5 minutes to visualize a picture of their watershed that they would like to see in the future and discuss a statement that depicts the image they have. Each group was then asked to draw a picture of their vision using a flipchart paper and markers that were provided.

2. Historical Profile

Each group was asked to identify 3-5 issues that impacted the village watershed and resources and list their chronological history throughout previous decades. The period that was mapped would depend on the age of people in the group. This tool helped to show a historical picture (changes over time) of the watershed, the community, significant events and how it has shaped the current situation.

3. Resource Mapping

Each group was given a satellite image of Faga'alu watershed, flipchart paper, and markers. The participants were asked to label on the watershed image the resources found within Faga'alu and to identify the impacts to these resources. They were then asked to identify ways on how to better manage these resources.



PLA workshop group activities

RESULTS

Collective Vision

As a result from the PLA workshop, 47 participants, from ages 5 to 72, developed a vision statement for its watershed and as an ultimate goal for its village watershed action plan. The vision for Faga'alu village watershed plan is as follow:

Faga'alu watershed contains a community that is well informed and actively involved in its stewardship. It hosts a healthy and clean environment from ridge to reefs that is safe for the children to be in, visitors, schools, neighborhoods and local shops. In addition, village livelihoods are well supported through sustainable agriculture and fisheries. The village council takes ownership in managing the watershed in collaboration and partnership with residents, land owners, hospital, school, business sectors, local and federal government to protect and conserve the village watershed for its future generations.



PLA Collective Vision drawings

Historical Profile

Table 1 shows the priority issues that were identified by all the groups. These issues include trash, developments, tree cutting, and illegal fishing. The table indicates the increase of impacts to the resources and village watershed from pollution, constructions and developments, removing of trees and illegal fishing practices began around the 1980s to the 1990s. These issues have perceived to contribute more to the impacts of sedimentation and erosions in the streams and coastal areas in the village. Presently, the problems have developed in much worsen situations for the village environment.

Other issues that were identified by the groups during this activity are listed below:

- Piggeries
- Air Pollution
- Hospital chemical waste
- Climate Change
- Fishing boats (oil spills)

| Issues | 1940-1950 | 1960-1970 | 1980-1990 | 2000-Present |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Trash | Landfilled – Matafao dumpster | Observed trash from littering but was not an issue | Trash were observed on beaches, streams, roads and increasingly impacting the environment | Increased (mostly soda cans, plastics bottles) and worsen |
| Construction and Developments | Less constructions and development in village so less sedimentation | Less constructions and development in village | Increased constructions and development so more sedimentation impacting land, streams and reefs | More constructions and development at hospital, quarry, park, roads and streams |
| Tree removing/cutting | Less tree cutting | Less trees cutting | More trees cut/removed so more erosion at streams and coastal areas | More trees cut/removed so more and worst erosion problems |
| Illegal Fishing | Less boats and illegal fishing | Less boats and illegal fishing | More fishing boats with motor oil affecting the reefs | More fishing boats with motor oil and increased in illegal fishing activities |

Table 1: Historical Profile of Faga’alu watershed

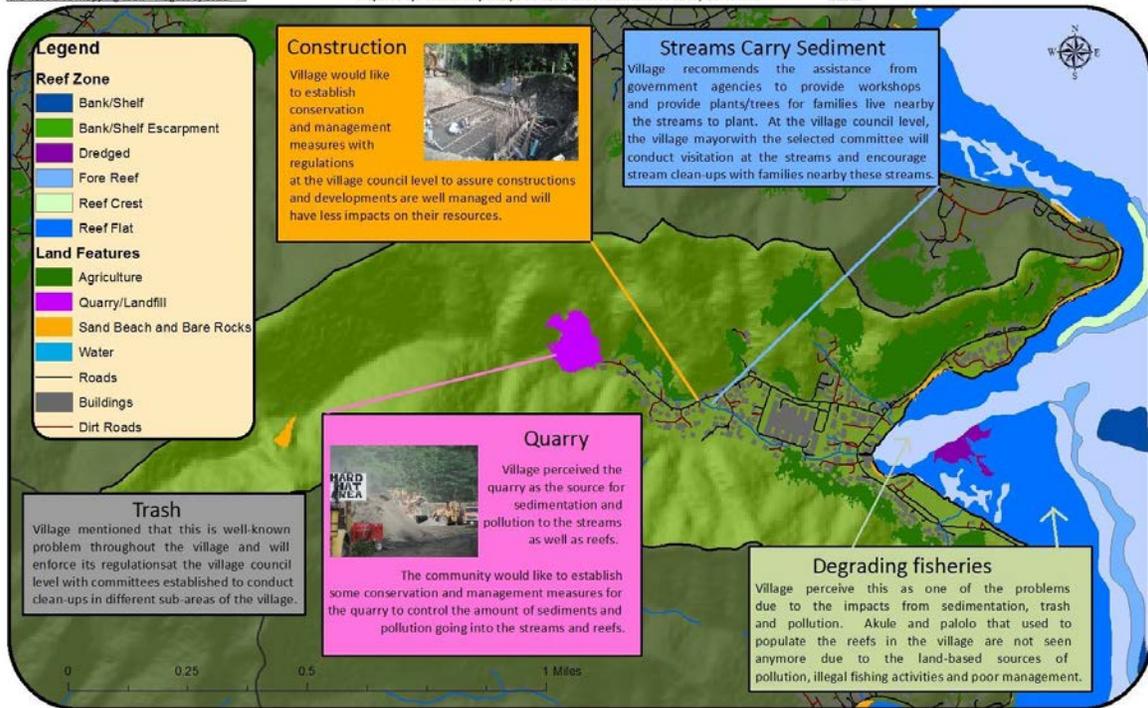
Resource Mapping

In the Resource Mapping tool, each group was given a satellite image of Faga’alu village that highlights the village targeted watershed. The groups were asked to use the maps to identify key resources within the watershed, impacts to the resources and provide recommendations on management and conservation approaches. As a result, the groups identified trash, sedimentation, and declined fisheries as the major problems to the watershed with key sources for sedimentation which are the quarry and a construction site by the stream. In addition, they informed that the trash problem is known to be everywhere within the village but more recognized at the streams and coastal areas.

Purpose: This map was generated from the PLA watershed workshop for Faga'alu village using the Resource Mapping tool. August 8, 2011

Faga'alu Watershed PLA Resource Map

Prepared by: Christin Reynolds, DOC-CZMP and Fatima Sauafea-Le'au, NOAA-PIRO



Information and recommendations collected from both the PLA and CAP have helped to develop the Faga'alu village watershed plan attached (Appendix A).

CONCLUSION

It is important that the local knowledge of the community on natural resources is integrated into resource management. Moreover, providing the community with training and educational opportunities for skills development will enhance their participation in the management effort. Not only does community participation aid effectiveness, but it is more efficient where the local knowledge helps to minimize wasted time and energy, and can deliver results more rapidly. Community participation has been a process whereby local knowledge, skills and resources can be mobilized and fully used. The PLA project for Faga'alu village has provided an opportunity to build capacity at both the village level and government agencies to strengthen the management and conservation of Faga'alu watershed. In addition, it has enhanced collaboration and partnership among resource partners with enthusiasm to expand and adapt the PLA process to other key watersheds and resource areas in American Samoa. Not only that, the successes and accomplishments that have so far attained in this project using the PLA approach have helped in the selection of Faga'alu as one of the three priority watersheds under the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

REFERENCES

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Pedersen Planning Consultation, American Samoa Watershed Protection Plan 2000. For American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency and Coastal Management Program, American Samoa Government.

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APPENDIX A

| Faga’alu Watershed Management and Conservation Plan 2012-2013 | |
|---|--|
| <p>Threat: Trash</p> <p>Trash is perceived to be one of the major threats impacting the village streams, beaches and coastal areas. There is poor management practices and litter practices by people within the village as well as those visiting from outside to the hospital, park, school and local shops. The village would like to be well educated and informed on ways to better manage their environment and become stewards of the environment.</p> | |
| <p>Objective1: By 2013 50% of Faga’alu residents are greatly aware of impacts of trash and other environmental issues in their village and are working cooperatively to keep the village clean.</p> | |
| <p>Strategic Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Determine the most effective education and awareness campaign to raise awareness of trash problem and to share results that highlights impact of trash to the village 1.2 Implement the education and awareness campaign every six months with pre and post surveys to determine effectiveness 1.3 Faga’alu village Mayor and committee work with appropriate agencies to support the implementation of the education and awareness campaign to village and other watershed communities 1.4 Faga’alu committee assist the LBSP LAS agency members to facilitate education and outreach programs at Matafao Elementary School each quarter | |
| <p>Lead: Village Mayor</p> | <p>Supporting Individuals/Organizations:</p> <p>ASEPA, ASPA, OSA, NOAA-PIRO, TNC, DPH, LBJ, Le Tausagi, DMWR, ASCC Land grant, CRAG, DOE, USDA-NRCS</p> |
| <p>Objective 2: By 2012, three village clean-up committees are established to take responsibility in cleaning and reporting on collected trash from designated areas in Faga’alu village.</p> | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Strategic Actions Determine a clean-up and reporting process that will be used by designated committees for the village clean-ups 2.2 Identify community members that are willing to take part in the clean-up process and to be part of each three committees 2.3 Hold regular meetings with each committees to discuss the clean-up and reporting process 2.4 Collaborate with the LBSP LAS working group to secure necessary support to implement village clean-ups 2.5 Village participation in the ICC effort with appropriate agencies 2.6 Secure more trash bins and have them available in the village 2.7 Evaluate trash collected through analyzing reports from the village clean up committees | |
| <p>Lead: Village Council and Mayor</p> | <p>Supporting Individuals/Organizations:</p> <p>ASEPA, CRAG, ASPA, OSA, DMWR, ASCC Land grant, NOAA-PIRO, DPH, USDA-NRCS</p> |

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| Objective 3: By the end of December 2012 , Faga’alu village has established a village inspection team lead by the village mayor to undertake a monthly visit within the village to ensure that the community is less likely to be impacted by trash. | |
| Strategic Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Establish regulations and guidelines for trash disposal by the village council 3.2 Establish procedures for a community inspections by the village council 3.3 Determine appropriate fines for violation 3.4 Village committee work with LBSP LAS members to incorporate trash disposal regulations, inspections procedures and fines in the village watershed plan 3.5 Establish an inspection team lead by the village mayor and other village chiefs | |
| Lead: Village Council | Supporting Individuals/Organizations: ASEPA, CRAG, OSA, DMWR, DOC, USDA- NRCS, ASCC Land grant, NOAA-PIRO, ASPA |
| Objective 4: By January of 2013 , a village recycling program is established and maintained by the village council. | |
| Strategic Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Village Mayor coordinates with appropriate agency to set up recycling program in Faga’alu village 4.2 Set up recycling stations and agree on a clear process for maintenance of these stations 4.3 Provide community education and awareness on the purpose and benefits of recycling 4.4 Develop signs for Faga’alu on keeping the village and island clean | |
| Lead: Village Mayor | Supporting Individuals/Organizations: ASEPA, DMWR, CRAG, NOAA-PIRO, USDA-NRCS, ASCC Land grant, DOC, OSA, ASPA |
| | |
| Threat: Sedimentation | |
| <p>The impacts of sedimentation have affected the environment and resources within the village. Most of the impacts have been observed in the stream, coastal and beach areas. Faga’alu village would like to develop protective and management measures to reduce sedimentation such as planting trees within these highly impacted areas, installing seawall or rock-walls and ensure that any development in Faga’alu complies with building and safety goals.</p> | |
| Objective 5: By 2012 , Faga’alu village has established and adopted storm water regulations consistent with the American Samoa Water and Erosion Management Plan. | |
| Strategic Actions | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Village Watershed Committee works with the AS EPA to review and understand storm water and Erosion management plan and to identify appropriate measures at the community level 5.2 Village Council establish storm water and erosion control measures in Faga’alu village | |

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|---|--|
| 5.3 Establish appropriate process and fines for addressing violations | |
| 5.4 Village Mayor coordinates with PNRS to ensure that village regulations are taken into consideration in project review | |
| Lead: Village Mayor | Supporting Individuals/Organizations: ASEPA, DOC, DPW, ASPA, OSA, |
| Objective 6: By summer 2012 , the Faga’alu village in collaboration with the Am. Samoa Community College Land Grant Program is actively planting trees on identified unstable stream banks and coastal areas. | |
| Strategic Actions | |
| 6.1 Provide community education and awareness on impacts of soil erosion and the need to plant trees to reduce soil erosion | |
| 6.2 Establish community volunteer groups to conduct tree planting in collaboration with AS Community College Land Grant Program | |
| 6.3 Village Mayor collaborates with appropriate government agencies to identify priority areas that needs to be stabilized through tree planting | |
| 6.4 Implement tree planting with pre and post planting survey to determine survival rate | |
| Lead: Village Mayor | Support Individuals/Organizations: ASEPA, DMWR, CRAG, NOAA-PIRO, ASCC Land grant, DOC, Le Tausagi, USDA-NRCS, OSA, DOE |
| Objective 7: By the end of 2012 , a clear process and methods for stabilization have been identified and agreed between the Faga’alu village and appropriate government agencies to stabilize priority stream banks and coastlines | |
| Strategic Actions | |
| 7.1 Village Mayor coordinates relevant agencies to conduct surveys to determine which areas in Faga’alu faces serious erosion problems and determine the source of erosion | |
| 7.2 Appropriate government agencies collaborate with the Village committee to develop and agree on a process, methods and timeline for stabilizing these priority areas | |
| Lead: Village Mayor | Supporting Individuals/Organizations: ASEPA, DMWR, CRAG, NOAA-PIRO, ASCC Land grant, DOC |
| Threat: Decline Fisheries | |
| <p>In the past, villagers were able to conduct seasonal harvesting of the <i>akule</i> (big-eye scad) from the reef and catch other reef fish and invertebrates using safe and effective fishing practices. These resources were heavily depended on by the village community for consumption and sharing with families and friends. Today, there is a decline of fish and shellfish in the reefs of Faga’alu due to land use activities, sedimentation, and poor management practices. The impacts from land activities have also been indicated to affect the condition of the reefs in the village bay. Faga’alu village would like to take a management approach such as establishing a</p> | |

village-based Marine Protected Area (MPA) program with improved village enforcement to restore the resources in the village reefs.

Objective 8: By 2012, a Marine Protected Area is established with improved enforcement and management by the village in collaboration with appropriate agencies

Strategic Actions

- 8.1 Facilitate coral, fisheries and marine education and outreaches to youth groups
- 8.2 Village Mayor works collaboratively with DMWR in establishing a MPA site within the bay
- 8.3 Facilitate fisheries management, monitoring and enforcement training to village to build capacity and support in management

Lead: Village Mayor

Supporting Individuals/Organizations:

DMWR, CRAG, Le Tausagi, AS EPA, NOAA-PIRO, ASCC, DOC, DOE