



FSM Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project Newsletter

FSM R2R Project kicks-off the Lelu Clam Farm initiative, with support from the MMME RC&U and Lelu Town Government

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On the 27th of September, 2022, partners in Kosrae kicked off the Lelu Clam Farm Project, implemented by the FSM R2R project, through the Micronesia Management & Marketing Enterprise Reseeding & Consultant Unit (MMME R&CU), in collaboration with Lelu Town Government's Resource Management Unit. The primary goal of the project was to find the perfect grow-out site and to train farmers and interested individuals of the Lelu community on how to grow-out clams, which includes parasitic types and control, as well as the process of cleaning intervals. Equally important was the goal to transfer basic knowledge of the reproduction cycle, in order for the community to understand the importance and the positive impact of clams, and how the project will benefit the depleted clam population of the over-harvested reefs.

Day 1 included transferring of knowledge on larvae cycle, settlement and grow-out with timeframe up to maturity. In an active workshop, participants had the opportunity to raise questions and receive feedback. It also included a tour around the hatchery and questioning of the species' vulnerabilities and growth conditions. On Day 2, September 28, the trainees were taught on how to assemble cages that are suitable for the clams, how to harvest clams from the nursery tanks and deliver them to their designated sites. The Trainees were also informed of the requirements needed for the survival of the clams. A total of 500 clams, from the *H. hippopus* variety, were harvested and safely planted to their designated area on the second day. On the final day, September 29, trainees were reinforced of the conditions of survival for clams, the spawning cycle and how to prevent mortality. Stress factors were also addressed, as well as parasitic animals. A total of 500 clams were harvested and safely planted on Day 3. In total, two cages were made, each containing 500 *H. hippopus* clams.

Over-harvested reefs around the island are making it impossible for spawning to naturally occur, as the distance between two matured clams are too far. The Lelu Clam Farm project will support community awareness, youth education, become a source of attraction for the tourism industry, and serve as a natural spawning ground (within 2-3 years) for clams in Lelu when they reach maturity.

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R2R Project completes mangrove restoration project in SOU, Fefan



In August 2022, the FSM R2R project hired a local expert to facilitate the planting of at least 500 mangrove seedlings in the Sapo Oror and Ununo (SOU) area. SOU is located in the northern part of Fefan island, Chuuk State, FSM, about 1.5 miles south of the island of Weno. The present population of SOU is approximately 300 people, all currently residing in the village of Ununo.

SOU has a Forest Stewardship Plan, previously supported by the FSM R2R project in 2021 through restoration of wells and upland forest areas. Furthermore, on September 20, 2022, joined by the R2R Coordinator, Technical Officer and 28 community members (16 men, 10

10 women and 2 children), the restoration team collected and planted a total of 788 mangrove seedlings, exceeding the target, and covering approximately 0.65 ha of mangrove forests in the SOU area.

Mangrove forests play a crucial role in the survival of coastal shores. On the island of Fefan, more community members, especially the youth, are migrating to higher upland areas due to the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion. By involving community members, the rehabilitation effort aims to help rouse interest, especially among the youth, to proactively manage and protect vital coastal resources.

FSM R2R Project joins partners in Pohnpei to announce the completion of its MPA demarcation efforts



The R2R project is proud to share that the Pohnpei State Department of Resources and Development (R&D), in partnership with the Department of Land and the Pohnpei Port Authority (PPA), has completed the demarcation of 13 marine protected areas around the main island of Pohnpei. This initiative was recognized as a priority by the Pohnpei State Government to enhance the visibility of MPAs for public information. The FSM R2R project, in its effort to improve monitoring and surveillance of PAs through enhanced visibility of PA boundaries, partnered with Pohnpei State Government

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agencies and NGOs to demarcate priority PAs across the State. This effort, which began in 2020, and involved months of planning and consultations with relevant stakeholders, is now finally complete.

YCHS joins the annual Marine Island Ecology Course, with support from R2R

Throughout the summer of 2022, high school seniors in Yap State participated in the annual Marine Island Ecology Course (MIEC) to learn about and explore their marine island home environments. This annual program is coordinated by the Micronesian Conservation Coalition (MCC) and Yap Catholic High School (YCHS), with collaboration and support this year from the FSM R2R Project.



Eighteen students from YCHS were joined by two students from Xavier High School for this year's immersive field course. Students learned about marine island environments with virtual lectures from the MCC team in Guam while also being led through hands on lab experiences in the YCHS Science Lab by the YCHS coordinators, including three recent YCHS graduates who had participated in the program in 2021.

The highlights of this unique program, however, are the different field experiences, which include mark and recapture labs on land, tours of watershed areas and mangrove/ nippa restoration projects and several days of snorkeling for data collection. The FSM R2R team in Yap also presented to the students about the R2R program, to create an even deeper connection of what they learned in the course with the current projects occurring in the FSM to protect and preserve the marine environment.

R2R project completes well restoration for Kuop



On October 19, 2022, the R2R Project PA Rangers, and a team from the Chuuk Department of Marine Resources (DMR), completed the restoration of a well, as part of the implementation of Kuop's PA management plan. This followed a capacity needs assessment held for Kuop atoll, where the community selected well restoration as a priority activity to be implemented under the R2R project. The work was carried out over 3-days, and subsequent water quality testing results demonstrated that renovated water source was free from E.coli bacteria.

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