

# Palau National Invasive Species Committee

## FINAL Minutes



**Meeting:** 2015-02  
**Date:** March 17, 2015  
**Time:** 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
**Venue:** EQPB Conference Room

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### Attendance:

#### Present:

Fred Sengebau, Chair	BOA
Joel Miles, Secretary	BOA
Yalap Yalap	PCS
Francesca Sungino	EQPB
Percy Rechelluul	BMR
Olkeriil Yaoch	EQPB
Geraldine Rengiil	PICRC

#### Absent:

Attorney General's Office (EQPB legal counsel)  
Customs  
CRRF  
DEH  
DFWP  
OERC

#### Guests:

Lesley Vick	Micronesia Challenge
Isechal Remengesau	PAN Office

### • **Call to Order/Adopt Agenda**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:43 pm. The agenda was adopted as presented by the Coordinator (version 2)

### • **Announcements**

#### • **RBP Approved by US Department of Defense** – Coordinator

Joel announced that he has received a notification from the US Department of the Navy that the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii (RBP) has been approved. Now we face the task of actually implementing this plan. This was a key item for discussion at the RISC meeting earlier this month.

#### • **Rattan mapping and cleanup at Ngerderar** – Coordinator

Joel announced that he worked with the Ngerderar Watershed Conservation Area and staff of Forestry and PAN to map the infestation of the invasive plant rattan at the NWCA on February 26. They are planning a cleanup of rattan seedlings at the NWCA, with students from Aimeliik Elementary School, on March 20.

#### • **Cycad research: visit by Dr. Marler of UOG** – Coordinator

Joel announced that he is expecting a visit by Dr. Thomas Marler, one of the world's top experts on cycads, from March 23-27. Joel is working with the Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement as well as the Airai State government and the Belau National Museum to

arrange for Dr. Marler to visit locations with cycads in these two states – the only places in Palau where this rare plant is found. The plants are threatened by the invasive Cycad Aulacaspis Scale which is present on non-native cycads in Koror and Babeldaob but is not known to have infested our native cycads. This scale has devastated the native cycad plants on Guam. It is under control in Palau thanks to an effective biological control agent introduced in 2009 with the assistance of the University of Guam.

- **Pacific Invasives Partnership Meeting next month** – Coordinator

Joel announced that the Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP) will meet in Suva, Fiji from April 14-16. He is seeking funding to attend the meeting on behalf of Palau and representing the RISC (he is the Secretary of the RISC).

- **Reports**

- **Invasive Species Awareness Day** – ad hoc committee

- i. The ad-hoc committee briefly reported on the activities, including radio talk shows, an essay contest, a Presidential Proclamation and Presidential Press Conference. 500 Commemorative towels were printed with funding support from OERC and will be distributed by the Coordinator at events throughout this year. Joel will draft thank-you letters to all donors for the signature of our Chair.
- ii. The NISC agreed to expand the observation to a week for 2016, with the theme “What Can We Do?” This theme will also be used by the RISC in 2016. We will change from Awareness Week to Action Week, to emphasize the need to take action.

- **Forestry Meeting in Yap** – Coordinator

- i. Joel reported that he gave two presentations on IAS to the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forestry Committee – representatives of the US Forest Service in California and Hawaii were there, along with forestry staff from American Samoa, the RMI, FSM (national government and the states of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, and Palau. Joel was invited to the meeting to give a presentation on regional cooperation to combat invasive species, and he gave a second presentation on surveillance/monitoring of invasive species in forests.
- ii. Joel had discussions about imperata eradication and PA invasive plant surveys with US Forest Service staff. The USFS can support these projects; Joel will draft one-page “concepts” for review prior to developing funding proposals.

- **RISC meeting in Guam** – Coordinator

- i. Joel informed the NISC about the results of the RISC meeting, including decisions about regional coordination, calendar, ISAD/W, info on CRB trapping with fishnet, and criteria for IAS in PA management

- **Updates**

- **Macaque Challenge Grant expiration** – Coordinator – Joel informed the NISC that the Challenge Grant has expired. What this means immediately is that Island Conservation is no longer providing half of the Coordinator’s salary (as of March 1). This funding is included in the President’s supplemental budget request, which is still being discussed in the OEK. If it is not approved, the Coordinator may be reduced to half-time. In the longer term, Island Conservation still wants to work with Palau to remove the macaques, when Palau is ready to move forward with this. In the meantime, we will need to step up efforts to prevent movement of macaques from Angaur to the rest of Palau.
- **Biosecurity Bill Status** – Chair – the bill has been passed by the House of Delegates, but it is still in committee in the Senate while the committee chair works to get enough signatures to get it onto the floor.

- **X-ray machine donation** – Chair & Coordinator – we have received a cost quotation for shipping, installation, and training. Our Chair is working now to get the funding for this.
  - **Kayangel plans** - Coordinator – We are planning with the Kayangel state government and Belau National Museum to conduct an invasive plant survey in April, plus CRB assessment and installation of traps. The BOA may also initiate a fruit fly eradication project at this time, but this is not yet definite.
  - **Eurasian Tree Sparrows** – Coordinator – Joel announced the possibility of getting a graduate student from Arizona to look into population and control. He will work with the Chair to make arrangements with the Ministry of Health to move this forward, taking care to work through proper channels.
  - **GEF 6 Invasives Project** – Coordinator – Joel has learned that the RMI will join SPREP in a Pacific regional invasive species project, so they cannot join our proposed Micronesian regional project. The FSM has not yet decided whether they will allocate any of their GEF 6 allocation to invasive species. We will go ahead with our own project, as committed by President Remengesau, as part of a project on Biodiversity Conservation. Palau’s invasive species project will include a component for implementation of the Regional Biosecurity Plan. We will continue to invite our Micronesian partners to join us in implementing the RBP with GEF funding, or with funding from another source.
  - **Praxelis in Ngeremlengui** – Coordinator – We are continuing cleanups of the two infestations of the invasive plant praxelis in two sites along the Compact Road. The situation is improving, and Joel believes it will be possible to completely eradicate this plant, although he cannot predict exactly when the project will be complete.
  - **White Shrimp** – Coordinator and Chair – the Chair informed us that the Embassy of ROC-Taiwan has offered to assist with a risk assessment. There was quite a bit of discussion of the importance of having an unbiased and well qualified scientist conduct this study. BMR informed us that FAO has advised that we may need a survey first to show that white shrimp are not already present in Palau – this is not likely since they are not native to Palau. Percy will work through the Acting Director of BMR to request assistance of FAO and SPC for the survey and risk assessment.
  - **Others**
    - **IAS in PA management – criteria and guidelines** – Joel & Lesley  
Joel and Lesley have been working on criteria for adoption by the PAN and the Micronesia Challenge to ensure that invasive species are integrated into effective conservation of protected areas. Joel reported that the RISC reviewed the criteria and made edits to shorten the document. Joel has been tasked by the RISC to “polish” the document (remove typos, check grammar, etc.). He will send the final document to the MC Regional Coordinator, who will share it with the Micronesia Challenge Steering Committee. The RISC and MCSC will present a final recommendation to the next MCES for endorsement. Joel will also present this to the PAN Office for adoption for PAN sites.
    - **Date for next meeting** – the next regular meeting will be held on May 12, 2015, at the usual time and place (2-4 pm, EQPB Conference Room).
    - **Adjourn** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 pm, after the Chair thanked EQPB for hosting the meeting.
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