



Negros Wetlands & Waterbird Summit 2017

“Negros Wetlands and Waterbirds Conservation Their Future is Our Future”

Provincial Capitol Negros Occidental, Philippines



Philip Godfrey Jakosalem, Lisa J. Paguntalan, Christine Mansinares and
Kevin Colacion

Executive Summary



Regional Director For. Livino Duran of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region on his welcome address.

The Negros Wetlands and Waterbird Summit: Negros Wetlands and Waterbirds Conservation Their Future is Our Future, convened in Negros Occidental Provincial Capitol Social Hall, Negros Occidental, Philippines 17 May 2017, brought together 50 participants from the representatives from local government units, research, civil society and non-government organizations during the celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day 2017. The Summit was hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region (DENR NIR), the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI), the Provincial Management Office (PEMO), and the Negros Occidental Tourism Division (NOTD) in collaboration with Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) with funds support from the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership. The Summit sought to lay the foundations for new and continued wetland stakeholder dialogue, transitions toward sustainable tourism products and investments, and further research to support evidence-based policy making, all directed toward achieving reasonable conservation and more sustainable management of wetlands in the newest Ramsar site in Negros.

The summit concluded that:

- To achieve reasonable and sustainable conservation of Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area, all stakeholder must work together to achieve conservation goals.
- Harmonization's of plans and programs within different government organizations and to be incorporated to the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area management plan.
- Conduct inventory of tourism products in each local government units and the potential ecotourism enterprise
- A wider wetlands and wetlands summit will be held during the first anniversary celebration of the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area Ramsar Site.



Negros Wetlands and Waterbird Summit

Philip Godfrey Jakosalem¹, Lisa J. Paguntalan¹, Christine Mansinares² and Kevin Colacion³

Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc.
Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region
Negros Occidental Tourism Division

Background



Group photo of the participants of 2017 wetlands and waterbirds summit held at the Capitol Social Hall, Bacolod City. The participants are coming from the local government units within the wetlands.

Wetlands come in all shapes and forms, from rivers, estuaries, white and grey sandy coastal wetlands, ponds and inland lakes. They are essentially important ecosystems that provide many important services to the environment and society. The Wetlands functions, they play a critical role in groundwater recharge, flood attenuation, improvement of water quality, biodiversity and most of the economic value to the local community. The contribution of Negros wetlands to biodiversity has been internationally recognized through their designation as Ramsar sites (Ramsar site no 2217) the seventh in the country and the fourth East Asian Australasian Flyway Network site in the country.

Conservation of wetlands and waterbirds is widely considered to be crucial for sustainable development and society. To achieve conservation of wetlands and waterbirds, local conservation organizations and government agencies must translate scientific knowledge into local knowledge so that it is understandable to non-scientific communities. The wetlands and waterbirds conservation is also looking at the effectiveness and efficiencies of wetlands management and conservation. However, it is also important to share the highlight the standards in making conservation in different place working the same conservation activities. There are programmes from other partners may help specific management concerns and also provide clear state of biodiversity and contribute to national of local policies.

To address these issues the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region (DENR NIR), the Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI), the Provincial Management Office (PEMO), the Negros Occidental Tourism Division and Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Areas Management Council (NOCWAMA), different local government unit (LGU) of Negros and other network of partners will come together for forum in title *“Negros Wetlands and Waterbirds Conservation Their Future is Our Future”* and share different knowledge and experience

in working in on wetlands conservation. Thus this symposium aims to gather together the different local government units, wetlands conservationist and partners from the island.

This summit aims to promote cooperation around the management of wetlands as an important platform in conservation, awareness and strengthened partnerships between different wetlands and waterbirds conservation, government organization and non-organizations in the wise use of wetlands within the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Areas and other key important wetlands in Negros Island Region. The summits will provide insight on plans and programs geared towards global wetlands conservation targets. Specifically the objectives are the following:

1. To bring together experts from the field, practitioners and mandated institutions working on wetlands and waterbirds conservation for a forum and stepping up the conservation of wetlands and waterbirds.
2. To document different tourism potential enterprise, initiatives in wetlands conservation and identify gaps and opportunities for future collaborations
3. To create a network of technical experts in waterbirds and wetlands conservation support within different partnerships.
4. To provide a forum to different partner's conservation NGO's, professionals, scientist, conservationist, to share knowledge on various aspect in the conserving wetlands and waterbirds.

Speakers



Regional Director For. Livino Duran of the express his interest that all the stakeholders must work together for the conservation of wetlands.

The Wetlands Summit featured a line-up of speakers that included the Chief, Provincial Environment Management Officer Negros Occidental Atty. Wilfred Ramon Peñalosa of the Province of Negros, Protected Areas Specialist Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region For. Rujonel Cariaga, Ms. Christine Mansinares the Chief, Negros Occidental Tourism Division, Province of Negros and Ms. Lisa Paguntalan Executive Director Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PBCFI) talks about the future directions of our wetlands. The organizers of the summit made every effort to ensure that the program gave space to technical experts and

practitioners, and that speakers were equally distributed across different line agencies and stakeholder groups and gender in the province.

In his welcoming address, Regional Director Livino Duran noted the significance of the timing, pointing to the critical decisions affecting the future plans and programs of our wetland is very important he said. Director Duran added that we need to work together for the management of these important wetlands. He also mentioned about how important this wetlands to the local communities.

Our first speaker is Forester Rujonel Cariaga Protected Areas Specialist from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region. He presented how the Negros Occidental Coastal Areas Conservation Areas started and the plans and programs that the DENR. He mentioned that the wetlands of Negros Occidental was started by the initiatives of Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc. during the conducting the Asian Waterbird Count in the south central part of Negros Occidental. The results of the count were then presented to the province lead Center for Environmental Initiates (CEI) Forum organized by the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO), a quarterly forum on the environment within the province. He also mentioned that the Biodiversity Management Bureau also recognizes the efforts from the DENR and partners by identifying the wetland as Wetlands of International Importance. Mr. Cariaga also mentioned that the different local government units lead by the province the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO) together with Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Inc., University of St LaSalle Bacolod and the ten local government units from Bago City, municipality of Pulpandan, Valladolid, San Enrique, Pontevedra, Hinigaran, Binalbagan, City of Himamaylan, City of Kabankalan and the municipality of Ilog form an alliance called the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Areas Management Council (NOCWAMA) this is the council who will oversee the implementation of plan and programs of the newest Ramsar Site. Then he mentioned the recognition of the wetlands with at least 230,00 hectares lies along 10 kilometres coastline of Negros the seventh Ramsar Site in the Philippines on the 20th day of October 2016 and then few months after the wetlands was recognized as the fourth East Asian-Australasian Flyway Network site on the 5th January 2017 by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.



DENR NIR Protected Area Specialist Forester Rujonel Cariaga presented the history of the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area the latest Ramsar site in the country

Mr Cariaga also presented the plan and programs of the DENR NIR for the region; they are implementing different programs within the coastal areas like the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP), Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystem Management Program

(SCREMP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), Marine Turtle Conservation, Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structure (ARMS), Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) and Conservation of Wetlands. He also mentions the plan of the department in conducting a survey of the foreshore and management planning within the year.

The next speaker is from the Province of Negros Occidental, the chief of the Provincial Environment Management Officer Atty. Wilfred Ramon Peñalosa. Atty. Peñalosa presented the plans and programs of the province in terms of the Ramsar site particularly the coastal environment program they been implementing in the province. He mentioned the Coastal Management Program of the province includes resource assessment and inventory, resource regulations and utilization, resources conservation and rehabilitation and resource protection as part of the framework plan of the province and adopted by the different local government units. The framework plan is also implemented by the different local government units through its comprehensive land-use plan. The province also initiated building of alliances in coastal conservation includes Southern Negros Coastal Development Council (SNCDMC), Kabankalan-Himamaylan-Ilog Integrated Coastal Area Management Council (KAHIL-ICAMC), Central Negros Council for Coastal Resources Development (CENECCORD) and Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Area Management Alliance (NOCWAMA) where the Ramsar site was located. Alliance has played a major role in coastal resources conservation, protection and conflict resolution between and among LGU-members, specifically those related to municipal water boundaries dispute.

He also mention about their project on the Protected Areas Enhancement and Management funded by the GIZ and DENR which implementing resources inventory, survey and mapping, survey of household occupants, capacity building trained different partners on coastal law informant and creation of Local Conservation Areas (LCA) within the Ramsar site.



Provincial Environment Management Officer Chief Atty. Wilfred Ramon Peñalosa discusses the province direction towards the conservation of wetlands.

The provincial environment office will also update the 5 years development plants of the three alliances Kabankalan-Himamaylan-Ilog Integrated Coastal Area Management Council (KAHIL-ICAMC), Central Negros Council for Coastal Resources Development (CENECCORD) and Negros Occidental

Coastal Wetlands Area Management Alliance (NOCWAMA). Atty. Wilmon reiterated that partnership is the way forward in the conservation our wetlands.

The last speaker is Ms. Christine Mansinares the Senior Tourism Officer, Negros Occidental Tourism Division of Negros Occidental. Her talk is about the potential of the wetlands for ecotourism and different products that are sustainably produce in the wetlands. Wetlands provide important natural resources, upon which can help rural economy. They provide many substantial benefits not only to local society, but also to the people who live far away from them. They are recognised globally for their vital role in sustaining a wide array of biodiversity and providing goods and services and also as important sources of natural resources, upon which the rural economies depends. According to Ms Mansinares wetlands provide a wide range of tangible benefits and products to various communities. The tangible benefits include water for domestic use and watering of rice paddies, support to dry season agriculture, provision of handicrafts, building materials, and food resources such as fish and other marine resources. Wetlands also serve as habitats for important flora and fauna, have aesthetic and heritage values, and contain stocks of biodiversity of potentially for the birdwatching. List of potential wetlands product will be submitted by the different local government units within the important wetlands. The tourism will help and develop strategies in wetland including ecotourism strategy, marketing strategy and product strategy, pricing strategy and promotion strategy were proposed. It is hoped that the application of these strategies combination could foster the market of our wetland ecotourism and enrich the tourism products.



Ms. Christine Mansinares the Senior Tourism Officer, Negros Occidental Tourism Division of Negros Occidental presented the potential ecotourism wetlands products of Negros Island.

Summit Outcome

The moving forward and open forum was facilitated by the Executive Director PBCFI Ms. Lisa Paguntalan pointed out some of the challenges associated with the wetlands conservation. The speaker in the closing plenary session reflected on the discussions throughout the days and identified further commitments to new and continued multi-stakeholder conservation of the wetlands, research and investments in sustainable tourism products.



Executive Director PBCFI Ms. Lisa Paguntalan facilitated the open forum on the next step in the conservation of the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area

Here are some of the identified activities and plans for the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Areas.

- Continue on the monitoring of the waterbirds and the threats related to the wetlands
- Laid down different plans for different institutions e.g. foreshore lease plans of DENR, the Provincial environment plans for the three alliances Kabankalan-Himamaylan-Ilog Integrated Coastal Area Management Council (KAHIL-ICAMC), Central Negros Council for Coastal Resources Development (CENECCORD) and Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Area Management Alliance (NOCWAMA)
- Provide training on birdwatching tourism project by the Negros Occidental Tourism Division
- Conduct research and assessment of potential wetland tourism products
- Conduct more information and awareness program on the importance of wetlands of Negros
- Conduct a bigger wetlands summit during the first anniversary of the Negros Occidental Coastal Areas Conservation Areas

Acknowledgement

Summit organizers would like to thank the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership for the funding support for the Negros wetlands and waterbird summit. We also would like to thank Biodiversity Management Bureau DENR for the support and endorsing the project. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Negros Island Region Regional director for the trust and support for the program, the DENR Conservation and Development Division chief Engr. Rene Abordo and staff, the Negros Island Tourism Division and Province of Negros Occidental for accommodating our request for the venue, the Provincial Environment Management Office, and Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area Management Council. The organizers would like to thank several individual for making the summit possible Mr Anson Tagtag of BMB, Ms Olive Seruelo, For. Rosie Pablico, For. Rujonel Cariaga, former DENR NIR regional Director Al Orolfo and Ms Grafe Rose

Arbado of DENR NIR. Also thank you to all the stakeholders from different local government units and communities and wetland resource users for coming to the summit.

Programme

Schedule	Program of Activities	Resource Person
08:30AM	Registration	DENR PBCFI
09:30AM	Opening Program	DENR PBCFI
	National Anthem / Invocation Prayer	DENR PBCFI
	Welcome Remarks	Livino Duran Regional Director DENR NIR
	Message	Ms. Lisa Paguntalan Executive Director PBCFI
	Introduction of participants	EMCEE
11:00AM	DENR Plans and program	Rujonel Cariaga Protected Areas Specialist DENR
11:30AM	Province Initiatives	Atty. Wilfred Ramon Peñalosa Chief, Provincial Environment Management Officer Negros Occidental
11:31AM	Tourism Potentials	Ms. Christine Mansinares Chief, Negros Occidental Tourism Division
12:00NN	Lunch	
01:00PM	Moving Forward	Ms. Lisa Paguntalan Executive Director PBCFI
02:00PM	Open Forum	Ms. Lisa Paguntalan Executive Director PBCFI