



World Wetlands Day 2010 - Philippines "Caring for Wetlands an Answer to Climate Change"

Date: 02 February 2010
Venue: Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center, Quezon City
Organizers:



Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc.
Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau –
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Architectural Students' Association of the Philippines –
University of the Philippines-Diliman Chapter

Background

Wetlands are diverse and productive ecosystems that provide a wide range of benefits including flood control, ground water replenishment, water purification and biodiversity storage. The Convention on Wetlands more popularly known as the Ramsar Convention is the Intergovernmental Treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and its resources. At present, there are 154 Contracting Parties with a total of 1,636 wetlands site for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. Every year, the treaty assigns a theme to highlight the importance and issues of wetlands for awareness and appreciation of this natural wealth. This year's theme was "Caring for Wetlands an Answer to Climate Change".

Primarily, in the Philippines, this yearly event is organized by the *Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau* (DENR- PAWB) and the *Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands* (SCPW).

Highlights of the Programmed Activity

There were three major parts of the activity: awarding of the 2009 Philippine Wetlands Conservation Award; opening of the gallery of Project Designs for the Candaba Wetlands Design Competition; and signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between SCPW and PAWB on the development of a wetland showcase at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center.

Participants

The event has been attended by more than 100 individuals from different sectors coming from different parts of the country. Aside from the officers and staff of DENR-PAWB and SCPW, representatives from other non-government and private organizations were also present. Local government officials from certain municipalities in Negros Oriental,

Pangasinan and Sorsogon also participated in the program. In addition, students and teachers from different colleges and universities attended the event.



Opening Program

The event was hosted by Ms. Amy Lecciones, Vice President and Executive Officer of the SCPW. It started with an invocation led by Ms. Angela Mayor of *Unilever Philippines* followed by the singing of the national anthem.

Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, Director of the DENR-PAWB, gave the welcome remarks. From her speech, she stressed that there is "no better time to act than now". Further, she exclaimed that everything that we do to our environment, we do to our children. Dr. Lim also stated that this year is the time to prove that we can save the environment and biodiversity if we start today and act as one.

On the other hand, the opening remarks were given by Dr. Candido A. Cabrido, Jr., the President of SCPW. He gave a brief background and profile of SCPW and how it has evolved through the years. He also emphasized that this year's theme basically involves two key areas; biodiversity and climate change. More so, he also discussed the benefits of wetlands, reasons of conserving it and how it can be mitigate further environmental damages caused by climate change.



Keynote Speech

Assistant Secretary Regedor de Leon delivered the keynote speech, in behalf of Secretary Eleazar Quinto of the DENR. In his message, the Secretary quoted some lines from the movie *Avatar*, underscoring that as individuals, there are obligations for the health of environment, sustainability of the economy and achievement of a better quality of life. He also stressed the integrated approach to help solve these problems, whereby it requires collaboration among different sectors. He also stressed that we should continue believing in

partnerships, and employ a consensus bottom up strategy than a top-down approach. He closed the message with another line from the movie *Avatar*, saying that “Our Great Mother doesn’t choose sides, but only protects the balance of life.”

Signing of Memorandum of Agreement

A major part of the event was the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the *Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc.* (SCPW) and the *Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau* (PAWB). The memorandum was signed by Dr. Candido Cabrido, Jr. for SCPW and Dr. Mundita Lim for PAWB. The signed agreement is for the development of a wetland showcase at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center to demonstrate the functions and services of wetlands.

After the MOA signing, an intermission number was given by Teatro Pilipino, where the members gave an interpretative dance of a ritual in Tawi-Tawi. They also presented a short excerpt from their theatrical play entitled “Florante at Aladin”.



Philippine Conservation Award 2009

The 2009 Philippine Wetlands Conservation Award was given to individuals and local government units who have been recognized as significant contributors to the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Ms. Marlynn Mendoza, Chief of the Protected Areas and Community Management Division of PAWB gave an overview of the ceremony. She explained its history, and gave a brief discussion about the winners last year, the 1st Philippine Wetlands Conservation Award (PWCA). For the 2nd PWCA, nominations and selections of winners have been done at the end of year 2009. The judges were Dr. Rafael Guerrero of PCCARD, Ms. Elisea Gozun of DENR and Dr. Gil Jacinto. The sponsors of this include the *San Miguel Corporation*, *Ford Foundation* and *Manila Water Company*. For this year, the winners were the Local Government Units of the Municipality of Prieto Diaz (Sorsogon) and the Municipality of Amlan (Negros Oriental); each won fifty thousand pesos, with plaque and gifts. Further, special citations were also given to the Municipality of Bani (Pangasinan) and the City of Bais (Negros Oriental), where each has been given ten thousand pesos plus plaque and gifts.

After the awarding ceremony, a video clip about caring for wetlands was shown.



Candaba Wetlands Centre Design Competition: Exhibit

The *Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc.* in partnership with *G-Star Ventures and Development Corporation* has launched the Candaba Wetlands Centre, the very first in the country, at the Total Gas Complex, North Expressway, Apalit, Pampanga. Located at the edge of Candaba swamps in the Apalit area, an Information Centre is planned to be part of a complex that also include the development of a Wetlands Interpretive Site.

The Information Centre is intended to provide basic information about the importance of wetlands, specifically the Candaba swamps, so that their functions and ecological services are appreciated by the general public. The Interpretive Centre, on the other hand, is designed to provide experiential learning activities for those who wish to have a more meaningful appreciation of wetlands and its wise use.

In line with this, the SCPW, in partnership with the *Architectural Students' Association of the Philippines – UP Diliman Chapter (ASAPHIL-UP)*, has organized the Candaba Wetlands Centre Design Competition. In this project, which is sponsored by *Unilever Philippines, Total Philippines Corp.* and *Manila North Tollways Corp.* the winning design will be the basis of the construction of the Candaba Wetlands Centre.

As a major activity of the project, the gallery of the design concepts from twenty-five competition participants was exhibited in the Amphitheatre of Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center. The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the gallery was led by Ms. Amy Lecciones of the SCPW. Dr. Mundita Lim of PAWB, Ms. Annalee Ventura of Unilever Philippines, Atty. Rogelio Quevedo of G-Star Ventures and Assistant Secretary Regedor De Leon of DENR were invited to join the ceremony.



Closing Program

After the program, Ms. Lecciones thanked all the participants and attendees of the World Wetlands Day Celebration. She expressed her gratitude towards the people and organizations that made the event successful.



World Wetlands Day Programme

9:00 AM – 12:00 AM
Amphitheater
Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Centre
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

CARING FOR WETLANDS

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| Invocation and Philippine National Anthem | Signing of Memorandum of Agreement: Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands |
| Welcome Remarks: Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim Director, Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau | The Candaba Wetlands Centre Design Competition Ms. Amy M. Lecciones Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands |
| Opening Remarks: Dr. Candido A. Cabrido, Jr. President, Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands | Ribbon Cutting to the Gallery of Entries to the Candaba Wetlands Centre Design Competition Asst. Secretary Regedor de Leon, DENR Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim, PAWB Vice President Amy M. Lecciones, SCPW Ms. Annalee Ventura, Unilever Philippines Atty. Rogelio Quevedo, G-Star Ventures |
| Keynote Message: Mr. Regedor de Leon Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources | |
| Presentation of the Philippine Wetlands Conservation Award Ms. Marlynn M. Mendoza Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau | |
| Intermission Number: Teatro Pilipino | Tour of the Exhibit |

an answer to Climate Change

Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau | Ramsar | Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc.