Buasao Watershed, Abra



Address: Abra

Description: Threatened by a growing population, increasingly influenced by cosmopolitan culture and a cash economy, the traditional “lapat” system of natural resource management is in danger of disintegration. By reinforcing CBRM in the Buasao Watershed and Mount Poswey, however, FPE has helped re-establish the value of this ages-old beliefs and practices system.

Status: Closed

Site Profile Summary

Ecosystem Type	Sub-montane to Montane Forests
Biogeographic Profile	
Flora	- Benguet pines abound in the area. - Orchids, narra, and other hardwood species are found in the area.
Fauna	- Found here are Philippine endemic bird species, such as the Stripe-headed *Rhabdornis* (*Rhabdornis mystcalis*), Large-billed crow (*Corvus macrorhynchus*), and the Red Jungle Fowl or *sabag* (*Gallus gallus*).
Indigenous Peoples	- The Maeng and Masadi-it tribes practice an indigenous way of natural resource management called “*lapat*,” which proved to be a sustainable system throughout generations.
Livelihood Resources	- Farming, River-fishing, Animal grazing, and Forest products

Threats

- Poverty and scarcity of livelihood opportunities exert enormous pressure on the Maeng’s natural resources. These factors lead to overhunting of wildlife, timber poaching, and unsustainable farming techniques.
- Faced with a burgeoning population, the fraying of traditional community bonds, and the influence of a cash economy, the “*lapat*” system is in danger of disintegration.
- Few members of the community are confident enough to take up the challenge and to prove that they can conserve and protect the biodiversity of Buasao watershed for the next generations of Maeng.
- The greater challenge facing the community is how to sustain the gains that have resulted from

conservation and resource management interventions that took place in the previous years. Although morale is high from their modest achievements, some community members are hesitant to take the reins of project implementation.

FPE-funded Projects and Initiatives

Project	Grant Type, Strategy	Duration	Implementing Partners
Community Lapat-Based Biodiversity Conservation of Buasao Watershed and Mt. Poswey	Medium to Large, Site-focused	2006-2009	- Tipon iti Umili para ti Panangsaluad iti Nakaparsuan (TIPON)
A Shift Towards Area-Specific Intervention through Strategic Planning for Six Priority Sites: Zambales, Palawan, Buasao, Guiuan, Pulangi and Bohol Marine Triangle	Large, Site-focused, Proactive	2006	
Community Based Resource Management Project of Buasao Watershed and Mt. Poswey	Large, Site-focused, Constituency-building	1996-2005	- Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG) - Tipon iti Umili para ti Panangsaluad iti Nakaparsuan (TIPON)
Community Land-Use Planning and Mapping for Biak-na-Bato, Buasao Watershed, Baggao and Mt. Bulusan	Medium, Constituency-building, Site-focused		- Philippine Association for Intercultural Development Inc. (PAFID)
Environmental Legal Defense – Cordillera (Terminated)	Medium, Proactive, Environmental Defense	Oct 1997-Jun 1998	- DINTEG-Cordillera Alternative Law Center
Site Assessment and Advocacy for Buasao Watershed & Mt. Poswey	Medium, Environmental Defense	Apr-Sep 1995	- Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Governance (CCAGG)

Key Outcomes

- Site resource and socio-economic profile assessments were coordinated and implemented.
- About 15,000 narra and other dipterocarp seedlings were raised in three barangay nurseries within the duration of the main CBRM project. Areas have also been set aside for agro-forestry.
- The CBRM project also provided about 600 *rambutan* and *lanzones* seedlings while the LGU added 300 mango seedlings.
- Strengthening of the "*lapat*" system was apparent in key ordinances passed by the municipal government unit and the Abra Provincial Board recognizing and adopting "*lapat*" as an indigenous practice of resource management.
- To alleviate pressure on the natural resources, the community developed alternative livelihood projects such as loom-weaving and tilapia production.
- Paralegal training was also an integral component of FPE's involvement in the area, providing an

environmental defense safety net for the community members there.
- Capacitated Tipon iti Umili para ti Panangsaluad iti Nakaparsuan (TIPON), into an entrepreneuring IPO.
- Drafting, finalization, and adoption of the Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP).

Reference

- *Foundation for the Philippine Environment. 2004. Sustaining Biodiversity Conservation Initiatives: Site Focused Projects 2003. Quezon City, Philippines: Foundation for the Philippine Environment.*

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