

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Yela Environment Landowners Authority
Project Title:	Yela Forest Reserve: A Critical Ecosystem and Natural Habitat
Date of Report:	February 21, 2012
Report Author and Contact Information	William K. William PO Box 831 Kosrae, FSM 96944 Office Phone: (691) 370-6002 Email: wkwil198@yahoo.com

CEPF Region: Pacific-Micronesia

Strategic Direction: SD-2: Strengthen the conservation status and management of key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: \$20,000

Project Dates: November 2010 – November 2011

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

A Yela Working Group has been established and engaged heavily since the start of the project. Its participatory approach was conceptualized on a non-legally binding cooperative-partnership that formed a network which consisted of key stakeholders who share a common interest in supporting the Yela forest conservation project in various dimensions. The diverse group represents eight (8) different agencies from the state government as well as NGOs. YELA, KIRMA (Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority) and KCSO (Kosrae Conservation and Safety Organization) formed the core team that is mainly responsible for implementing the project activities with some degree of assistance from the other members. This close partnership and social networking made it possible for YELA to successfully achieve the following key milestones in spearheading the project forward:

- Community awareness programs including the school programs
- Legal support for Yela Conservation Area
- Strengthened collaboration and partnership with local and regional partners
- Yela Integrated Ecosystem Management Plan (YIEMP)

This working group created an atmosphere as a forum for networking and dialogue to discuss various local cross-cutting issues concerning the environment and other global concerns. The different stakeholders bring about their own unique assets, personal traits, and qualities that blend in concertedly well in moving towards the goals and objectives of this project.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The CEPF Strategic Direction and Investment Priority (Ecosystem Profile) for this project is in line with **SD-2: Strengthen the conservation status and management of 60 key biodiversity areas**. The key activity under SD-2 that this project addressed is outlined under Section 2.2: Improve the management of existing protected areas that are priority sites.

An 87 acres of wetland in Yela, which is privately owned by a group of landowners, has been set aside as a protected area. This unique forest of the endemic plant species called *Terminalia carolinensis* is traditionally managed and protected by a local community-based organization. The site is a portion of the hotspot site 56 (Okat-Yela *Terminalia* forest) identified under the CEPF

ecosystem profile. The management of this site has been strengthened with strong monitoring efforts by the landowners group. The establishment and management of this area also support the goals of the FSM NBSAP, Kosrae BSAP and the Micronesia Challenge.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

The awareness component of the project was the main thriving force towards the success of the project. Multiple school visits, community and leadership workshops have been carried out to increase their understanding about the conservation values of Yela forest. The increased awareness of the local communities and leaders resulted in a more committed and motivated atmosphere that led to the achievement of the other expected outcomes.

Expected result 1 & 2 (as stated in the approved proposal):

Increased awareness level on the conservation values of the Yela forest amongst local communities; and Socioeconomic survey in identifying potential threats, mitigation measures, and tangible benefits;

Overall results/impact of project:

At the beginning of the implementation phase, the community workshops were targeting a total of 200 members in the whole community of Tafunsak and Walung. But through the strengthened collaboration and partnerships between the local partners, the community workshops and school visits were expanded to include all the communities in Kosrae. At the end of the project period, the total number of participants in all school visits and community workshops has reached approximately 1000. Radio spots and video documentaries were also delivered as part of the awareness program which highlighted more about the Yela Ka forest.

Although no consultant was available and YELA lack the capacity to develop, implement, and gathering data of a socioeconomic survey, the concept was integrated into the community workshops. Threats were identified, mitigation measures, and tangible benefits were discussed in depth by community members and thus resulted with positive attitudes towards the conservation and management of Yela forest.

Expected result 3: (as stated in the approved proposal)

Ecotourism promotion through site readiness developments (e.g., visitor center, boardwalk, & interpretative materials) and website development;

Overall results/impact of project:

Tourism is a challenge to island of Kosrae due to less awareness of the uniqueness of resources and other tourist attraction sites that we have. In Yela, a visitor center and a boardwalk have been built to enhance awareness and improve access for visitors. Through our ecotourism promotions by way of partnerships with Kosrae Visitors Bureau, hotels/resorts, and other regional organizations, interpretive materials (such as brochures) were already disseminated and other informative materials are still under development. After the center and boardwalk construction had been completed, the number of visitors has increased by at least 50% comparing to the previous year. Some community members have already experienced the benefits by means of income generating activities through boat transportation fees and catering local food for visitors.

Expected result 4:

Legal recognition of the Yela conservation area through local ordinance or legislation;

Overall results/impact of project:

The increased level of awareness in the communities and State leaderships, along with the stronger partnerships between local partnering agencies and community groups, has led to the enactment of the Kosrae Protected Area Act in December 2010. This has set a corridor for all existing and proposed protected areas to be recognized under this law as Protected Areas and prevent activities that would degrade the natural resources. Traditionally, the Yela Ka forest has

already been recognized and respected by community and the Tafunsak municipal government as a protected area. The site has already been introduced into the review process by our government partnering agency while awaiting the final review of the Yela Integrated Ecosystem Management Plan. Soon the Yela Ka forest, including its surrounding ecosystems will be the second proposed protected area to be recognized by State law as a protected area.

Expected result 5:

Development of a management plan (e.g. Ecosystem-Based Management or Conservation Action Plan) for Yela conservation site.

Overall results/impact of project:

The need to have a management plan for Yela Ka forest has given the opportunities for some of the Yela staff to build their capacity in various management planning and conservation action planning trainings. Within the project period, management planning workshops were carried out which involved participation of community members, regional and local partnering agencies, and stakeholders. The in-depth planning, discussion, relevant inputs, strong supports and commitments by these participants has led to the expansion of the proposed Yela conservation area from ridge-top to reef flat, and thus led to the development of the Yela Integrated Ecosystem Management Plan that is still undergoing final review. This management plan will be a guiding tool to ensure effective management of the Yela Ka forest, including surrounding ecosystems from ridge-to-reef, and it will also be the tool to have the whole of Yela watershed recognized under the Kosrae Protected Area Act as a protected area.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: 35.21 hectares (87 acres)

Species Conserved: 99 plant species

Corridors Created:

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

Although the shortage of manpower and resources remain the top challenges for YELA, we were able to overcome some of these internal constraints and shortfalls in accomplishing the project activities through collaborative network with our local partners, leverage with other funding sources, and multi-tasking with additional assignments beside original job description for our staff. YELA was also able to contract a team of local developers to build the on-site infrastructures like the visitor center and boardwalk.

Obviously these are constraints influenced by availability of funding. YELA needs to work through these challenges with what is available to us. We hope to hire few additional employees when funding is available to improve our institutional capacity in becoming more self-reliance in the near future. Our resources are still limited and lacking the proper technologies, equipments and tools to efficiently and effectively implement the project activities. However, we are striving heavily on our conviction and ambition to do our very best with the limited resources and hopefully things will enshrine as we grow to be a more self-sufficient organization in the near future. We try not to dwell so much on “don’t haves” but to embrace our perseverance and resilience to move forward. Our biggest asset thus far that drives us forward is our determination, motivation and pride. With the strong partnership and close alliance with our local and regional partners, we have utilized the network to the best of our advantage to redress our shortfalls. YELA is part of the “core action team” that jointly conducts the outreach awareness campaigns, school visits, consultation workshops and trainings together. Pooling of resources with our local partners is another strategy that we constantly exercised to deal with our own integral limitations and challenges.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Following the awareness and management planning workshops, some communities have become more interested in setting aside their own conservation areas and some have strengthened management of existing protected areas. The outcomes of the Yela Ka forest project have triggered these communities in adopting the YELA's model to establish their own protected areas. YELA staff were invited to facilitate some of these communities' management planning workshops and assisted in developing their management plans. A watershed alliance is still in the planning pipeline between YELA and another community called "OLUM" following a FSM Watershed Learning Exchange that took place in Kosrae.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The lesson learnt during the project designing process was that outputs/deliverables must be achievable and need to be identified carefully to ensure that projects are not over-ambitious. At an infancy stage, a project must work its way up the ladder at one step at a time in order to achieve the long-term goals targeted.

Networking and collaboration with local partners, including used of existing programs, would make project designing less complicated. Inputs and contributions by partners are vital to project designing to avoid replication of shortcomings in other community projects that may undermine its progress.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Time is always a valuable asset that needs to be managed effectively. With a management plan in place and work plans developed for a conservation project, implementation of project activities and events would be effective and efficient. One major concern that may affect a project was the timely coordination of fund disbursement from other donors contributing to the direct costs of this project. It is a good example of some external events or situations that are beyond our control which can seriously undermine the progression or success of a project.

The huge success is the strong support and commitments from partners and relevant stakeholders. Developing a working group with diverse skills, inputs, and contributions would definitely move things forward for a project to excel. In a situation where professional experts are not available to consult and assist in the implementation, the concept could still be delivered in-depth through combined efforts the working group thus achieving the same expected results.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

None

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
MCT	A	\$10,000	Support operation costs and mostly for institutional/staff capacity building; Project will end in Feb. 2012
MSGP	A	\$15,000	Support sustainable management of Yela forest: covers Admin. Costs, awareness programs, and ecotourism promotions. Project ends-Dec.2011
GGF	A	\$3,000	Support awareness raising in schools/communities; adopting the "Train the Trainers" model to establish awareness program with full involvement of school teachers and students. Project ended-Nov. 2011
FSM Congress	A	\$2,000	Support supplies and equipment costs; Project ended-Feb.2011
TNC	B	\$10,000	For Yela operation costs, specifically to support legal assistance in securing land title for remaining parcel; for meetings and associated costs. 1-yr. project

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The management team and leadership of YELA are more confident and competent today as the project continues to strive forward. We are more self-sufficient and reliable in terms of planning, fundraising, coordinating and implementation of the project activities today with minimal contribution and assistance from our partners and support network. The entire management and coordination of the project is spearheaded independently by YELA and its leadership. The YELA management team is more equipped with new knowledge and skills from several trainings and capacity-building exercises attended in a number of technical areas and ventures. Although YELA still lacks the professional expertise, it is pretty apparent that we accomplished great strides and recognition with the project through divine determination, perseverance and collaborative partnership.

Probably the weakest element daunting the management and leadership of YELA remains the availability of funding and strategic approaches or mechanisms for sustainable funding of the Yela project. Obviously, YELA is still not yet in the best institutional capacity of a self-reliant organization considering the lack of various fundamental resources for it to be on its own feet. The availability of funding is more or less the blood line that will determine the faith and future prospect of the Yela project. However, the management and leadership of YELA is working diligently hard to identify potential funding sources, opportunities to raise more funds and to capitalize on local and regional initiatives for leverage, such as Micronesian Challenge, Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change, and Kosrae State Sustainable Development Plan just to name a few on the horizon.

YELA is on a quest to establish the first conservation easement in Micronesia which has never been tested in this region before, though proven to be successful in some part of the Pacific islands, Hawaii and US mainland. If this initiative is successful, then YELA can be assured to secure not only the protection of the Yela forest in perpetuity as a legally protected area in Kosrae but also the source and mechanism for sustainable funding in the long run.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

None

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

YELA is extremely happy with the driving success and progress in implementing the project activities. We are pleased with the outcome of the project in respect to implementation of the project activities towards meeting the set objectives and targets. All the key activities listed for the project in the work-plan were successfully implemented to the best of our capabilities, though only a few minor components will have to be redressed or expanded as we progress forward. In general, we are satisfied with the accomplishments and strongly feel that the project is a success. However, the course could have been more timely and efficient if the coordination and processing of the fund disbursement were in synchrony as originally projected.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: William K. William

Organization name: Yela Environment Landowners Authority

Mailing address: PO Box 831, Kosrae FSM 96944

Tel: (691) 370-6002

Fax:

E-mail: wkwill98@yahoo.com

*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please
complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(November 2010-October 2011)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.			35.2 ha	Yela Ka Forest traditionally declared as a protected area through community agreement; Strong support and partnership with local NGOs and government agencies;
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	Yes		615.2 ha	Yela Integrated Ecosystem Management Plan developed;
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes		615.2 ha	3 of YELA staff deputized as Environmental Law Enforcers; Increased community awareness of natural resources conservation and management;
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	Yes			

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit													
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased Income due to:				Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
									Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services									
Tafunsak community	X	X	X			X		X	X			X						X	X		
Walung community	X	X	X						X			X						X	X		
Total																					

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:

