



Most Significant Change The GEF Pacific STAR R2R Project - FSM



Delineation of the Kitti Watershed Forest Reserve



Jerry Route

My name is Jerry Route. I'm from Kitti, serving as the MPA Network Coordinator at the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP). My role requires working with resource managers and other stakeholders to ensure effective management of Protected Areas (PA) in Pohnpei State. I became involved with the R2R project through various initiatives led or supported by CSP on behalf of the project. These include the annual learning exchange for PAs, delineation and demarcation of PAs, coral reef monitoring, the FSM bird surveys, etc.

There have been a number of key changes achieved through the project, but let's begin with what has transpired on land. For many years, Pohnpei State has tried to delineate the Kitti Watershed Forest Reserve, but faced a lot of challenges, especially in the Kitti Municipality where most of the Sakau farmers reside. Through the R2R project, the watershed was finally delineated. Additionally, water contamination, due to human activities,

continues to be an issue for Pohnpei. To improve water quality, the R2R Project supported the construction of several Dry Litter Piggeries in Pehleng – a highly populated community in Kitti known for having limited access to information on effective waste management techniques. On the marine side, legally recognized PAs are now demarcated through a combination of efforts from the project, government agencies and NGO partners. The R2R project also helped purchase a floating raft, which now serves as an enforcement station for both Government Officials and Community Conservation Officers. This has been very helpful in strengthening enforcement of PAs.



Field team delineating the watershed

Among all, I would say that the delineation of the Kitti Watershed Forest Reserve created the most impact. Pohnpei State Government has tried over 30 years to delineate the watershed, but without success due to misunderstandings between resource users and the government. The government's approach, coupled with its inability to provide alternatives for income generation and insufficient resources to effectively inform the general public on the importance of natural resource management, made it an impossible mission. The R2R project was able to learn from these lessons, utilizing a bottom-up approach that highlighted ecosystem-based approach techniques with an emphasis on conservation as a way to safeguard biodiversity, and using applicable scenarios that resonated with the mindset of locals helped garner their support. With support from the

traditional leaders of Kitti, the team was able to proceed to with the ground work. The delineation work is the biggest step, but there is still work to be done to ensure that the watershed is effectively managed.

I chose the watershed as an achievement because, on the island of Pohnpei, if we do not manage the uplands, everything below will be affected. Pohnpei is one of the wettest places in the world, therefore, if we do not manage natural resources on land, we will continue to witness sedimentation and landslides impacting marine ecosystems. We must first ensure that upland areas are well managed before everything else, if we are to be successful in our work.



Field team delineating the watershed



Signing of the MOU between government and Kitti Municipality

