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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR, foundation to rehabilitate Surigao del Norte mangroves

March 26, 2022, 1:44 pm



DESTROYED. Mangrove plantations were among those severely damaged in Surigao del Norte after Typhoon Odette in December 2021. In this photo posted by the non-governmental organization Sentro para sa Ikaunlad ng Katutubong Agham at Teknolohiya in January, matured mangrove species in Barangay Mabuhay, Del Carmen, are down but starting to grow leaves again. *(Photo courtesy of Ronald Al Jurado/SIKAT, Inc Facebook)*

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation, Inc. (JVOFI) have signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the restoration and rehabilitation of mangroves that were severely affected in Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte by Typhoon Odette in December 2021.

The JVOFI will provide PHP10 million to cover the cost of restoration and rehabilitation of storm-damaged mangroves, particularly in the municipalities of Del Carmen, Dapa, General Luna, San Benito, and Socorro in Surigao del Norte and for the implementation of solid waste management activities in the island, according to a news release on Saturday.

In 2019, the Del Carmen mangrove site was awarded the Para El Mar Best Mangrove Award in the Philippines by the Marine Protected Areas Support Network.

DENR-Region 13 (Caraga), Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in Surigao del Norte, and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Dapa will serve as project implementers.

They will conduct the identification and delineation of the 143-hectare mangrove site and determine the mode of plantation establishment, protection, and maintenance.

In the MOA signing on March 15, DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna and JVOFI president Reinaldo Bautista Jr. agreed to conduct a three-year post-disaster restoration and rehabilitation.

Typhoon Odette ravaged agriculture, infrastructure, and environment on the island and damaged the mangroves planted through the National Greening Program.

“The partnership recognizes the importance of addressing climate change and the sense of urgency to act now. We need our mangroves more than ever,” Sampulna said.

Bautista said it was “the beginning of our continuing partnership”.



The signing at the DENR central office in Quezon City was attended by DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas Leones, DENR-Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Service Assistant Director Maria Sabrina Cruz, Project Preparation Division Chief Conrado Bravante Jr., Region 13 Executive Director Nonito Tamayo, Environmental Management Bureau-Region 13 Director Albert Arcamo, JVOFI executive director Ma. Rosario Lopez, and Surigao del Norte PENRO Alejandra Boiser.

JVOFI is a non-governmental organization that ensures the promotion of conservation, protection and rational management, and utilization of critical ecological resources in the country. **(PR)**



DENR commends SMC for cleanup initiatives in Tullahan River

Published March 26, 2022, 3:30 PM

by [Faith Argosino](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) lauded the San Miguel Corporation (SMC) for going beyond its target in cleaning and dredging the Tullahan-Tinejeros river system — one of the 17 principal river systems leading to the Manila Bay.

“Despite the setback brought about by the pandemic, SMC has proven its dedication to protecting and preserving our environment. We are very grateful for our partnership in securing healthier and cleaner waterways for a better future,” DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said.

The DENR and the SMC has signed an agreement under the Adopt-an-Estero Program.

As part of the agreement, SMC pledged P1 billion for the dredging and cleanup activities in the 36.4-kilometer river system, starting from La Mesa Dam in Quezon City and into Manila Bay, Centennial Park in Navotas City.

Since the initiative’s commencement in October last year, SMC has dredged 155,113 cubic meters of the area, and as of March 10, the company reported that it has finished dredging the portion of the river at Niugan, Malabon City — recovering 93,393 cubic meters of dredged materials.

To date, SMC has dredged 789,951 cubic meters and covered 7.71 kilometers of the river from Sector 1 or Manila Bay to Tonsuya Bridge Bangulasi, Tañong, Longos to Sector 5 or Tullahan Bridge to NLEX Potrero, Marulas, Gen. T. de Leon.

“Dredging these areas, which are located close to urban areas and industrial complexes, could help prevent the accumulation of pollutants such as trash, debris, decaying vegetation, and even unwarranted toxic material spills,” Sampulna said.



Palace urges public to observe Earth Hour

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos March 26, 2022, 12:28 pm



(Photo from Earth Hour FB page)

MANILA – Malacañang on Saturday enjoined the entire nation to participate in the Earth Hour, an annual global movement that aims to raise awareness on climate change and other environmental concerns.

In a press statement, acting Presidential Spokesperson and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar asked the public to turn off their lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

“Today, March 26, 2022, we celebrate Earth Hour,” Andanar said. “Let us switch off all non-essential lights tonight at 8:30 p.m. as a show of solidarity and active involvement in shaping our future.”

Andanar made the call, saying the Filipinos’ participation would help mitigate the adverse impact of climate change on the country.

“The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and this year’s Earth Hour is a good reminder that climate change and global warming are real issues that we need to pay more attention to and require urgent action,” he said.

The Earth Hour, which started as a switch-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007, has become a global grassroots environmental movement that inspires millions of people from all over the world to turn off their lights for an hour.

The Philippines has been an active participant of the Earth Hour since 2008 and is consistently one of its biggest advocates.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, in a separate statement, called on the public to take part in the Earth Hour to “make a significant contribution to [the] country’s energy efficiency and conservation efforts.”

Cusi said the annual event serves as a reminder of “simple” practices that may yield a “great impact on ensuring a brighter future on [the] country.”

“When we connect with the earth, we are able to help shape our future,” he said.

Earth Hour 2022 will be celebrated through a “digital on-the-night doubling,” which would serve as an avenue to communicate the urgent need for world leaders to come up with a global action plan for nature in the coming decade. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1170704>



Publiko hinimok ng Malakanyang na makibahagi sa Earth Hour



March 26, 2022 @ 1:15 PM 17 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Hinikayat ng Malakanyang ang publiko na makiisa sa pag- obserba ngayong araw ng Biyernes, ng Earth Hour.

Ito'y sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatay ng ilaw sa loob ng isang oras mula mamayang alas-8:30 hanggang alas-9:30 ng gabi.

Sinabi ni Acting Presidential spokesperson Martin Andanar, isang paraan ito para makibahagi at maipakita ng bawat isa ang pakikiisa para sa paghubog ng mas magandang bukas.

Ani Andanar, magsisilbing paalala ang Earth Hour na ang climate change at global warming ay mga isyu na kailangang mabigyan ng atensyon at agarang aksyon.

Binigyang-diin nito na hindi ligtas ang Pilipinas sa bagay na ito lalo't ang bansa aniya ay vulnerable o hagip din ng climate change na nararamdaman sa mga nagdaan ng kalamidad na tumama sa Pilipinas. **Kris Jose**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/publiko-hinimok-ng-malakanyang-na-makibahagi-sa-earth-hour/>



Palace: Earth Hour a reminder that climate change, global warming are real issues

[Alexis Romero](#) - Philstar.com March 26, 2022 | 5:58pm



Cyclists stop in front of a globe at a mall after the lights are switched off for the Earth Hour environmental campaign in Manila on March 25, 2017.

AFP / Noel Celis

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Saturday emphasized the need to act on climate change as the world observed Earth Hour, which encourages establishments and individuals to care for the planet by switching off non-essential electric lights for an hour.

"The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and this year's Earth Hour is a good reminder that climate change and global warming are real issues that we need to pay more attention to and require urgent action," acting presidential spokesman Martin Andanar said in a statement.

Andanar said participating in the Earth Hour is "a show of solidarity and active involvement in shaping our future."

The Earth Hour will be observed from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday.

The environment department recently urged Filipinos to go beyond the symbolic switching off of lights and make environmental stewardship a part of their "new normal" lifestyle. Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna has said climate change is not foreign to the Philippines, which is frequently visited by typhoons.

The Philippines aims a 75% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 but the goal won't be reached if people continue unsustainable practices that significantly harm nature, Sampulna added.

The bulk of the target or 72.29% is "conditional" or dependent on the support of climate finance, technologies and capacity development, which will be provided by developed countries, as prescribed by the Paris Agreement. The remaining 2.71 percent is "unconditional" or will be implemented mainly through domestic resources, according to the finance department.

Organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Earth Hour started in Sydney, Australia in 2007 and is being supported by more than 180 countries and territories.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/03/26/2170073/palace-says-earth-hour-reminder-climate-change-global-warming-are-real-issues>



Palace to Pinoys: Act on climate change

[Rhodina Villanueva](#), [Alexis Romero](#) - The Philippine Star March 27, 2022 | 12:00am



Cyclists stop in front of a globe at a mall after the lights are switched off for the Earth Hour environmental campaign in Manila on March 25, 2017.

AFP / Noel Celis

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang yesterday emphasized the need to act on climate change as the world observed Earth Hour, which encourages establishments and individuals to care for the planet by switching off non-essential electric lights and gadgets for one hour.

“The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and this year’s Earth Hour is a good reminder that climate change and global warming are real issues that we need to pay more attention to and require urgent action,” acting presidential spokesman Martin Andanar said in a statement.

Andanar added that participating in Earth Hour is “a show of solidarity and active involvement in shaping our future.”

Earth Hour was observed last night from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The environment department had recently urged Filipinos to go beyond the symbolic switching off of lights and make environmental stewardship a part of their “new normal” lifestyle.

Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna said climate change is not foreign to the Philippines, which is frequently visited by typhoons.

The country aims for a 75-percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, but the goal won’t be reached if people continue to engage in unsustainable practices that significantly harm nature, according to Sampulna.

The bulk of the target or 72.29 percent is “conditional” or dependent on the support of climate finance, technologies and capacity development, which will be provided by developed countries, as prescribed by the Paris Agreement.

The remaining 2.71 percent is “unconditional” or will be implemented mainly through domestic resources, according to the Department of Finance.

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‘Shape Our Future’

The observance of Earth Hour in the country this year maximized online events and campaigns that carried the theme “Shape Our Future.”



In line with the annual “lights off” activity which is held every last Saturday of March, conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Philippines earlier came out with a social media mini-series dubbed #ShapeOurFuture that ran from March 1 to 11.

“This featured select individuals encouraging the public to probe into the election candidates’ platform for the country’s biodiversity conservation,” WWF-Philippines executive director Katherine Custodio said.

Apart from this, the group also launched “Earth Hour Virtual Run,” a self-paced virtual run that aims to promote a sustainable and healthy lifestyle, raise environmental awareness and support conservation efforts of WWF-Philippines. It commenced yesterday and runs until April 22.

Participants can choose their distance from 10 kilometers to 60 km. The registration started last Feb. 2 and ends on April 9.

Jefferson Lo, founder of Pinoy Fitness, which partnered with WWF-Philippines for the Earth Hour Virtual Run, expressed belief that “protecting the planet is everyone’s responsibility, especially for us runners and those who are into fitness, knowing how important the environment is.”

“We’re really happy that Pinoy Fitness, as a platform, can enable more active participation from our community. Rather than starting from switching off the light, we can now extend this campaign by donating their sweat, steps and distances,” Lo said.

“By joining this virtual event, they are giving back something already to the environment, helping WWF to shape the future,” he added.

It was also last night, an hour before the switch-off, when a “Countdown to Earth Hour” roundtable discussion was held. Hosted by WWF ambassadors Marc Nelson and Pia Wurtzbach, the discussion featured speakers from the Green Thumb Coalition, farmers and fisherfolk sectors and on-the-ground environmental workers.

The discussion focused on the importance of legislation and policies for the future of the Philippine environment.

“With 2022 being a critical year for both the environment and Filipinos, this aims to empower voters with the proper knowledge to create well-thought-of choices in the upcoming national election and elect leaders that will put sustainability on the pedestal,” Custodio said.

Millions of people participate every year in Earth Hour regardless of nationality or religion, making a true movement of humanity for the environment, according to WWF.

With the theme “Shape Our Future,” the environmental movement aims to be a platform to encourage and mobilize collective action for the environment by educating and inspiring everyone, especially government leaders, to act for nature and climate.”

For Wurtzbach, “it is high time that Filipinos educate themselves and one another about environmental issues, especially now that we are about to elect a new set of leaders who will lead us in the next six years.”

“Earth Hour is a step forward towards the goal to collectively act for our environment. We should cast our votes for leaders who will commit to address the worsening environmental issues,” she said.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/03/27/2170168/palace-pinoys-act-climate-change>

Earth hour 'good reminder' about climate crisis, Palace says

ABS-CBN News Posted at Mar 26 2022 05:24 PM



Climate activists from 350.org Pilipinas light up LED banners at the Malate Catholic Church calling for sustained climate action as part of the annual Earth Hour celebration on Saturday. *Jire Carreon, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA - Malacañang on Saturday urged Filipinos to join Earth Hour this year, a "good reminder" of the realities brought by the climate crisis.

Earth Hour will happen at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, wherein Filipinos are encouraged to turn off their non-essential lights for an hour to show their solidarity to protect the planet.

"The Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change," acting Palace spokesman Martin Andanar said in a statement.

"This year's Earth Hour is a good reminder that climate change and global warming are real issues that we need to pay more attention to and require urgent action," he added.

He said Filipinos should participate to show their support for the movement, describing it as an "active involvement in shaping our future."

A [report](#) by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change this month, the top global climate science authority, warned that heat waves, droughts, and extreme rainfall would become more frequent in coming decades as temperatures continue to climb.

Already, "increasing weather and climate extreme events have exposed millions of people to acute food insecurity and reduced water security," it said.

The UN climate change panel said global carbon dioxide emissions must reach net zero by 2050 if global warming is to be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius to curb disastrous impacts.

— Reports from Job Manahan, ABS-CBN News; Reuters

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/26/22/palace-urges-filipinos-to-participate-in-earth-hour-2022?fbclid=IwAR0x83cXfhYGNpAD8NbGPhjQZeMSGJed4J3FaWp69slq2MDGgzjkHYctatg>



Tonight is Earth Hour. Here's how you can participate

By Zoe Sottile, CNN Published Mar 26, 2022 4:53:24 PM



Tonight, for the 15th consecutive year, people around the world will turn off their lights for one hour. It's part of a grassroots global campaign called Earth Hour. (FILE PHOTO)

(CNN) — Tonight, for the 15th consecutive year, people around the world will turn off their lights for one hour. It's part of a grassroots global campaign called Earth Hour.

What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is an annual tradition started by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2007 in Sydney, Australia, to raise awareness about climate change. Participants in more than 190 countries will turn off their lights for one hour on Saturday.

Global landmarks — including the Sydney Opera House, the Gateway of India, the Beijing Phoenix Center in China, the Brandenburg Gate in Germany, the Colosseum in Italy, the Empire State Building in the United States and Christ the Redeemer in Brazil — will turn off their lights to show support for the campaign.

What is the purpose of Earth Hour?

WWF describes the event as a symbol of "unity" and "hope" for a sustainable future.

"Earth Hour aims to increase awareness and spark global conversations on protecting nature, tackling the climate crisis, and working together to shape a brighter future for us all," the WWF says on the Earth Hour website.

The Earth Hour campaign has led to other actions related to curbing climate change. The WWF's chapter in Uganda, for instance, created the first "Earth Hour Forest" in 2013. Also, Argentina used its 2013 Earth Hour campaign to help pass a Senate bill for a 3.4 million hectares (8.4 million acres) Marine Protected Area in the country, according to the WWF.

How can I participate?

You can mark Earth Hour by turning off your lights from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. in your local time zone.

The official Earth Hour website suggests seven ways that supporters can spend their lights-off hour, including reconnecting with nature and attending local Earth Hour events in their communities.

The WWF also recommends that supporters "take action beyond the hour, whether it is supporting a local WWF project or getting involved in Earth Hour campaigns in their own country, or starting the movement in their own community."

Source: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/world/2022/3/26/Earth-Hour.html>



Evening fun ride to save Earth

Published on: March 25, 2022 By Jimmyley Guzman

QUEZON CITY, (PIA) -- Come and join the fun while saving the Mother Earth and the environment!

The National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), Rizal Park Luneta, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) is calling all riders to join the Evening Fun Ride in celebration of the Earth Hour.

Join and light up the park on Saturday, March 26 at 8:30 p.m. at the KM 0 Marker, Rizal Park Luneta. Assembly is at 8 p.m. for the ride briefing.

Interested participants may register this link: <https://forms.gle/Y#earthhourluneta>

Earth Hour, organized by WWF, is a global grassroots movement uniting people to take action on environmental issues and protect the planet.

Engaging a massive mainstream community, Earth Hour was famously started as a '*lights out*' event in Sydney, Australia in 2007.

Since then, it has grown to engage millions of supporters in more than 185 countries and territories, inspiring individuals and organizations worldwide to take action for the environment, and driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the crowd.

As the movement grows, the one-hour lights out event continues to be the symbol of a broader commitment toward nature and our planet. **(WWF/PIA-NCR)**

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/2022/03/25/evening-fun-ride-to-save-earth>



SMC sinigurong ligtas ang Pasig River Expressway

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Mar 26, 2022

NEWS



Tiniyak ng San Miguel Corporation (SMC) na ligtas, maaasahan at magiging isang “sustainable infrastructure” ang ipatatayo nilang Pasig River Expressway (PAREX) na mahalaga para sa pagbangon at pag-unlad pa ng ekonomiya matapos ang pandemya.

Ayon kay SMC president at chief executive officer Ramon S. Ang, ang 19.37 kilometer road project na magdudugtong sa eastern at western sections ng Metro Manila – mula Rizal hanggang Maynila – ay karagdagan para sa P2 bilyong rehabilitation program na isinasagawa nila sa makasaysayang ilog na sinimulan noon pang Hulyo 2021.

Sa lahat aniya ng mga infrastructure project nila ay palaging binibigyan ng konsiderasyon ang magiging epekto nito sa kapaligiran at nakikipagtulungan din sa lahat ng stakeholder lalo na sa mga komunidad.

“In all our major infrastructure projects, we always take into consideration the effects on the environment, putting greater emphasis on how we can build the infrastructure while at the same time preserve or enhance the environment. We engage all stakeholders and in particular, partner with local communities to ensure environmental measures and mitigations are successful for the long-term,” pahayag ni Ang.

Nabatid na isang hybrid infrastructure ang PAREX na madadaan ng mga motorista, public transport, mga siklista at maging ng mga pedestrian para mapaluwag ang trapiko at hikayatin ang iba pang uri ng transportasyon.



SMC reaffirms commitment to build PAREX sustainably, reports gains in Pasig River cleanup initiative

March 25, 2022 6 min read

MANILA — San Miguel Corporation (SMC) has reaffirmed its commitment to build the Pasig River Expressway (PAREX) as a safe, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure crucial for an inclusive recovery and growth beyond the pandemic.

SMC President and CEO Ramon S. Ang said that building the 19.37-kilometer road that will link the eastern and western sections of Metro Manila—from Rizal province to the City of Manila—will complement its P2 billion, five-year rehabilitation effort for the historic tributary that already started in July last year to mitigate its impact on the environment.

“In all our major infrastructure projects, we always take into consideration the effects on the environment, putting greater emphasis on how we can build the infrastructure while at the same time preserving or enhancing the environment. We engage all stakeholders and in particular, partner with local communities to ensure environmental measures and mitigations are successful for the long-term,” Ang said.

PAREX will be a hybrid infrastructure that can be used by motorists, public transport, cyclists, and pedestrians, to further enhance accessibility and traffic decongestion, while encouraging multiple modes of transportation. Its design will also incorporate green architecture principles.

Ang bared that the country’s top urban planner and green architect, Arch. Felino “Jun” Palafox Jr., through his firm, Palafox Associates, has signed on to help with the sustainable design for the project.

“We share the vision of SMC and Mr. Ramon S. Ang for sustainable infrastructure. For many decades we have been emphasizing green architecture and green urbanism in our projects in the Philippines and abroad. For the PAREX project, our approach will be the same, we are designing not just infrastructure, but an urban landscape. We are promoting sustainability through architecture, with a holistic vision,” said Palafox.

“Mr. Ang already has so many good ideas, including incorporating green modes of transportation. Our job is to make sure these ideas—pedestrian pathways, bicycle highways, landscaped planting strip, public transport, are integrated seamlessly into the PAREX,” he added.



“We believe that if done right and in line with sustainability and green architecture principles, the PAREX will be a model road infrastructure that further democratizes the benefits and convenience of infrastructure. These are the types of infrastructure we will need in the future—adaptable to the growing and changing needs of our people,” Ang said.

He also touted plans to put up a Bus Rapid Transit on the PAREX and the existing Skyway system, which will interconnect, completing the north-to-south and east-to-west connection throughout Metro Manila.

This, he said, will enable faster, more reliable, safer, comfortable, and affordable commutes for many Filipinos. Ang said that with this, people will spend lesser time spent stand-still traffic, which exacerbates pollution.

Meanwhile, the chief executive reported that its ongoing Pasig River clean-up initiative has also ready yielded some 295,260 metric tons of silt and solid waste since it started middle of last year.

SMC maintains its target daily output of at least 2,000 metric tons of waste, to meet the monthly target of at least 50,000 metric tons, for a total of 600,000 metric tons extracted every year.

Ang said that the company’s ongoing rehabilitation effort is in response to the government’s call for the private sector to help clean major tributaries in line with the Manila Bay rehabilitation project that began in 2019.

“The government, led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, has done an excellent job in rehabilitating the Pasig River in recent years. We are helping take these efforts to next level, by deepening and widening the river, to enable it to carry more floodwaters, especially during the rainy season. Through this, we will reduce incidences of severe flooding that has affected many cities located near the Pasig River,” he added.

Ang emphasized: “Rehabilitating the river does not only involve dredging and removing visible wastes, especially plastics that eventually go to the sea. It is only part of the solution. What is needed is a more holistic approach, which will involve building a sewage system that would prevent it from being the dumping area of industrial and solid wastes.”

“We have committed clean the Pasig River and we are happy that more and more people see its value. In particular, NYK of Japan has joined our efforts and committed \$1.2 million worth of equipment and we expect the equipment to arrive by April,” Ang said.

Ang said that as of now, two shallow portions of the river are the primary focus. These are the mouth of the river near Manila Bay, and the area at the Marikina River junction.

“We’re also prioritizing the Marikina River junction as this section acts as a sort of a bottleneck, where water flowing from the Marikina River is restricted, therefore becoming a partial cause of the massive flooding in areas upstream of the Marikina River,” Ang said.

Dredging the Marikina River section can also help reduce the peak water flows that normally go into the Laguna Lake through the Manggahan Floodway, and reduce flooding experienced by many lakeside towns in Rizal and Laguna provinces, Ang said.

Ang added that thus far, SMC has made significant progress in deepening portions of the Pasig River, particularly sections of the river in Pandacan/Sta.Mesa, Paco/San Miguel area. According to hydrographic or depth surveys before and after dredging, sections that only measure two to three meters in depth are now more than five to six meters deep.



“We are confident that in the coming rainy seasons, the increased capacity of the river will reduce flooding in many areas in Pasig, Makati, Mandaluyong, and Manila. And if ever there will be flooding, it can quickly subside in just a few hours,” Ang said.

“This was our experience in the ongoing Tullahan River rehabilitation. To date, our extraction output there has reached 825,142 metric tons and with more personnel and equipment, we expect to hit the one-million mark before or by June this year. According to feedback from local government units, including Valenzuela, flooding has subsided faster than usual in their areas,” said Ang about the P1-billion Tullahan River rehabilitation effort that started in June 2020.



Climate change—it's not just about the gasses

BYRORY VISCO MARCH 25, 2022



In file photo: Iloilo City emerges back-to-back gold medalist as the most bike-friendly local government unit.

WITH the country's population growing dangerously every year, the amount of garbage likewise grows, but even more lamentably, not too many know how to dispose of it.

The National Capital Region (NCR), with an estimated population of 12 million, which worldpopulationreview.com said expands to about 15 million during the daytime (most likely because of people coming from the nearby provinces whose work is in the NCR), tops the waste production category among all regions, and some studies say the region spews about 10,000 tons of waste per day.

So, what does solid waste have to do with climate change?

According to Crispian Lao, Vice Chairman of the National Solid Waste Management Commission under the Office of the President and also the private sector representative for the recycling industry, solid waste is an integral component of climate change.

"When we speak of climate change, we look into methane or greenhouse gas and emissions, and from the perspective of solid waste, we normally look at methane and emissions in our landfills, black carbon from the transport of waste to the disposal facility as well as open burning of waste so it's very important for us that when we deal with climate change, we have to focus also on how our waste will contribute to climate change," Lao explained during the recent "Do Good for the Earth" webinar by Watsons Philippines.

Currently, the Philippines has enacted Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 that provides the spectrum to address solid waste management problems.

Lao said the law defines the roles of barangays, the local government unit (LGU) with the job of setting up MRFs (Material Recoveries Facilities) to deal with biodegradable and recyclable waste and to properly dispose of the residual as well as hazardous ones.

With regard to compliance of LGUs, only 35 percent of barangays have MRFs as mandated by law. "Only 31 percent of our local governments have access to solid waste or sanitary landfill disposal facilities. So, it's very important for everyone as well as corporate partners to deal with the waste that we generate so that it doesn't end up in an open environment."

So, what can be done? The National Solid Waste Management Commission is advocating for a food waste management program, he said. "We need to compost as much as possible our biodegradables, follow the hierarchy of waste avoidance, or avoid generating waste in the first place, bring our own bag when going to the groceries, participate in different programs that aim



to reduce generated waste, then reuse and recycle. For the recyclables, it is important, if we cannot avoid generation of wastes, to choose recyclables such as paper, plastic, glass, and metals.”

For paper, white paper is highly recyclable, including carbon boxes. Newspaper because the junk shop will still accept it and the junk shops will send it to recycling facilities, Lao said.

But some papers like thermal paper, carbon paper, wax-coated papers, photo papers, scented papers, are not recyclable, same with those that came in contact with food, grease, and oil, the paper used in toilets, tissue paper because of the potential risk of pathogen contamination, Lao explained.

As for plastics, Lao said, it is categorized as rigids and flexible. For rigids, they are the beverage containers, containers for shampoo, cleaning materials in the form of polyethylene and polypropylene. Then the flexibles, which Lao said are a bit challenging to recycle. There are recycling infrastructures for flexibles as well and even sachets. But it's important to participate in programs that recover and recycle flexible plastic materials. Of course, glass is highly recyclable, but don't include in the recycling stream like light bulbs and ovenware, which contains boric acid.

Of course, tin cans are highly recyclable, aluminum cans, and all metals including copper. “We can participate in alternative residual technologies such as conversion to building materials, school chairs, and other different projects done by many social enterprise groups. “There are drop-off centers in some of the biggest malls for recyclable materials,” Lao pointed out.

But for David Katz, founder and CEO of Vancouver, Canada-based Plastic Bank, has a different story when it comes to plastic wastes. He believes there is a solution to ending poverty through plastics using a circular economy model.

“The plastic that others considered waste or garbage, we consider as worth. It is about the opportunity to collect and exchange plastic for school tuition, or medical insurance or Wi-Fi, or cellphone minutes, or in other parts of the world, clean water or diversified food source,” Katz said.

The Plastic Bank is powerfully tackling this very opportunity, starting off with Haiti, then the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, Egypt, and then moving into Thailand and Cameroon.

“We won't end hunger, we won't get to gender inequality, we won't touch on education if we don't end poverty. Recycling is a way of being and the way of thinking in the world. And that's what the world needs more of,” Katz said.

Katz said their partnership with Watsons is an opportunity for the world to be witness of great change, to witness great organizations that are truly standing on the right side of history.

“You see, it takes the bold and the authentic to do something that hasn't been done before. And we know with our partnership with Watsons, the world is powerfully going to not just witness the change of the communities and the lives of our collectors, but they are going to see a new way of thinking and new way of doing business,” Katz said.

For Viki Herrera-Encarnacion, Watsons Philippines Public Relations and Sustainability Director, they are proud of their partnership with Plastic Bank, where they recycled 833,000 plastic bottles, including providing customers with almost 1,200 sustainable products with better packaging and ingredients and help them switch to more sustainable options.

Encarnacion said that the world relies on fossil fuels that give gas, heat and oil, daily essentials that also cause greenhouse gas emissions. Same with animals that emit methane when they



digest their food and pass gas contribute to global warming, while deforestation reduce trees that can absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

But while it may be impossible to totally prevent global warming, there are some things that can be done to lessen the earth's greenhouse effect, Encarnacion pointed out. "Walk more or bike or carpool. Turn off the lights or use alternative energy and grow a tree. Consume less. And if you really need to buy something, consider more sustainable products."



Greenpeace, San Juan City sign pacts for liveability, climate-responsiveness

BY BUSINESSMIRROR MARCH 27, 2022



City of San Juan government center

Greenpeace and the local government of San Juan City recently signed three memoranda of agreement (MOA) on World Water Day to promote sustainable solutions with the goal to promote better and sustainable cities.

The MOA signing between Greenpeace and San Juan, through Mayor Francis Zamora, coincided with the celebration of World Water Day on March 22 to highlight the importance of sustainable cities to ensure people's access to clean and safe water, as well as other ecosystem services provided by a healthy environment, Greenpeace said in a news release.

"As a city adversely affected by climate change, San Juan City is committed to saving our environment, not just preserving it but actually restoring it to its pristine glory," Zamora said during the MoA signing event.

"We are happy to partner with Greenpeace in pushing for a greener Philippines and a greener San Juan," he said.

Zamora added that signing the MOAs will also assure the San Juaneños that their government is committed to making these happen as subsequent environmental projects will also be launched for a cleaner, safer and healthier community, which further validate that San Juan now is truly a Makabagong San Juan.

"Local government units have a big role to play in the country's green and just recovery," said Greenpeace Campaigner Rhea Jane Mallari.

"As cities become more unlivable due to the increasing vulnerability and compounding impacts of climate crisis and pandemic, prioritizing people's well-being in city developments and programs need to come first," Mallari said. "We are happy to work with San Juan City in this initial step towards the realization of a just, livable and climate-responsive cities."

The partnership with San Juan City is part of Greenpeace's Liveable Cities campaign involves three key projects:

Community-based alternative delivery systems that will help address plastic pollution at root by integrating refill and reuse systems in community stores.

Installation of air pollution monitors within the city to keep track of air quality, particularly from fossil-fuel based transport



The Climate and Pandemic Response Portal which aims to spur citizen action towards climate resilient cities.

“The pandemic and the climate crises are showing us that the wellbeing of people and the planet are closely interlinked,” said Mallari.

“Instead of going back to normal, cities can aim for a better normal through policies and programs that do not just promote climate action, but will enable them to be resilient to disasters, and responsive to the well-being of citizens.”

Image credits: [Wikipedia CC-SA4.0](#)



Protecting forests, conserving water

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA MARCH 27, 2022



Angat Dam

Established through a United Nations General Assembly resolution on November 28, 2012, the 21st of March of each year has been declared as the International Day of Forests. Meanwhile, highlighting the importance of freshwater, the annual World Water Day is observed on March 22.

It is, hence, no surprise that both occasions are observed in March, when as the peak of the dry season in the Philippines, the water supply is an issue.

It also highlights the interconnectivity of forest and water which is essential to human survival.

Rich natural resources

The Philippines is blessed with vast forest cover and water resources. Of the 30 million hectares total land area, 15 million ha are classified as forestland.

Ironically, however, only around 7 million ha are covered with forest.

Likewise, the Philippines has abundant water resources. But water accessibility—or where and when they are needed remains a challenge.

Threatened resources

Massive deforestation and degradation particularly in some of the country's critical watersheds are strongly being felt in terms of water scarcity.

Aggravated by the impacts of climate change, water levels in natural or even man-made reservoirs go down faster than normal, especially during the dry season.

As demand for water grows, the country's groundwater resources are not spared. The demand for water inevitably grows along with population and rapid urbanization.

National Greening Program

Recognizing the need to rehabilitate the country's open, degraded and denuded forests to combat climate change, help reduce hunger and poverty, and consolidate all reforestation or greening efforts of the government, the private sector, academe and other institutions, then-President Benigno C. Aquino III signed Executive Order 26, series of 2011 to plant 1.5 billion trees in 1.5 million ha of lands of the public domain from 2011 to 2016.

On November 12, 2015, or a year before the National Greening Program (NGP) expired, Aquino signed Executive Order 193 to rehabilitate all the remaining unproductive, denuded and degraded forestlands estimated at 7.1 million hectares from 2016 to 2028.



Under the Duterte administration, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the lead implementing agency of the program, experienced huge budget cuts, compelling the agency to tap private-sector support to the massive tree-planting activities.

As of December 2020, around P49 billion has already been allotted for the program to cover the remaining unproductive, denuded and degraded forestlands nationwide.

Last year, the budget for the NGP was P3.158 billion. It was slashed down to P2.265 billion for this year.

Saving critical watersheds

Climate change and deforestation have an adverse effect on the country's watershed, particularly on the water quality of raw water at Angat Dam, said Roman Corpuz, manager at Watershed Management Division of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), in a pre-recorded video shown during the inauguration and opening of the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center in Quezon City on March 18,.

Corpuz cited an incident in November 2020, at the height of Typhoon Ulysses (international name Vamco), when water turbidity severely affected the operation of private water concessions.

The impact of water turbidity on water reservoirs, he said is severe that the operation of water treatment facilities resulted in slow and low production of clean and safe water during that time.

This pushed the MWSS to be committed to saving critical watersheds, according to new MWSS Chief Leonor "Bobby" Cleofas during the same event.

Cleofas noted the fact that the agency's Annual Million Tree Challenge (AMTC) aims to address the problem besetting not only the seven critical watersheds—namely Angat, La Mesa, Ipo, Kaliwa, Laguna Lake, Umiray and Upper Marikina—and now even Laguna de Bay, but also other degraded forests that need rehabilitation.

"The MWSS mandate is for us to be able to supply a sustainable water supply to the whole MWSS service area and provide sewerage and sanitation services. But equally important is the protection of the watershed; making sure that we have a healthy watershed for us to have sustainable water," she told the BusinessMirror.

Public-private partnership

In the Philippines, stories of public-private partnerships highlight the effort to protect and conserve forest and water.

Such is the case of water privatization—when the government and the private sector partnered to deliver safe drinking water to Metro Manila way back in 1997.

Then under the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos, the Philippines, through the MWSS privatized water services by engaging the services of Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Corp.

In 2017, Reynaldo Velasco, former chairman and administrator of the MWSS, launched the AMTC, a reforestation program to plant a million trees every year for five years in seven critical watersheds.

He then issued the challenge to the MWSS water concessionaires and set the ambitious reforestation target.

Proponents of the AMTC were able to surpass the target by 200,000 trees, planting a total of 5.2 million trees by February 28 this year.



In the pre-recorded video, Velasco attributed the record-low water level at Angat in 2017 to the environmental degradation in the Angat watershed.

“When I took over sometime in 2017, I realized that there was already a lot of tree-cutting in the watershed. It is affecting the water level in Angat. We encountered one of the lowest in terms of the level of Angat to about 156 meters [above sea level]. The critical level is actually 180 meters,” he said.

Sustaining partnership for the environment

To sustain the gains of AMTC, the proponents of the project decided to establish the Million Trees Foundation Inc. (MTFI), the institution behind the establishment of the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center.

“We have gone far ahead. We now have an office made of two retrieve container vans with roof deck, a gift shop and the Yakal Coffee Shop,” Velasco shared.

“Most of the wood that we used to make the chairs, the benches, and tables, were all salvaged from the stockyard of the MWSS,” he said.

Velasco underscored the valuable help and support of the private sector in achieving the ambitious target of the AMTC and ensuring the sustainability of the endeavor beyond 2022.

“Now, we are targeting to plant 10 million more trees until 2030,” he said.

As for the 5-hectare government property where the Tree Nursery and Eco Learning Center now sits, Velasco said there is a plan to develop the area.

“We have bigger plans for the Center. This is just the first phase. Moving on, the next phase is to build a Watershed Academy Building and a Water Trail to make the small space a multi-purpose area that is open to the public, open to students and researchers where they can embrace not only planting trees but the reality of climate change, and also to love Mother Earth more,” he said.

“MTFI will be knocking on the doors of institutional partners, and we are confident that they will support the Million Trees Foundation,” he ended.

Business sustainability

Jeric Sevilla, communications head at Manila Water, the private water contractor of the MWSS in the East Zone of Metro Manila and a supporter of the MTFI, said in the video that it is vital for the company to protect the environment that sustains its business, especially against the backdrop of the worsening impact of climate change.

“Climate change is very important in terms of the impact we are feeling right now. Droughts are very common; rainfall patterns are some sort of distorted and our watersheds, which sustain the raw water supply, are very important for us to protect,” he said.

“There is only one way in which we are going to be able to reforest the watershed area and that is to plant more trees to ensure that there will be watersheds in the future,” he said.

For her part, Anette H. De Ocampo, senior assistant vice president and head of Corporate Affairs and Communication at Maynilad, said nowadays, especially during summer, we experience extreme heat which cause the dam level to go down faster than normal. “Definitely, AMTC can help address the concern of climate change because tree-planting is the most effective way if not the only way to address deforestation. Also, AMTC is also able to reach out to the various stakeholders through its programs to the public and private sector,” she said in the video.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/03/27/protecting-forests-conserving-water/>



Next Philippine leaders urged to prioritize environmental issues

Published March 26, 2022 9:01pm



Farmers plant rice in Naic, Cavite, in March 2021. FILE PHOTO

Environmental issues should be a priority for the Philippines' next set of leaders.

During World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines' Shape Our Future: The Countdown to [Earth Hour 2022](#) virtual roundtable discussion on March 26, Earth Hour Philippines national director [Angela Ibay](#) said the next leader should focus on implementing green recovery plans, pursue sustainability, and promote local indigenous production.

"Definitely our next leader should be focusing on implementing the laws but I think they should be implementing green recovery plans because we're still coming out from the pandemic, and those plans should protect our natural resources, pursue sustainability in all of our systems whether it's food, water, energy, and definitely promote local indigenous production so that we reduce our reliance on external sources," said Ibay.

"Second, I support that there should be right robust funding and financing for local implementers, so that we can push positive environmental impacts even further," she added. Green Thumb Coalition convenor Jaybee Garganera, meanwhile, said they launched a scorecard to measure the candidates' "green" agenda.

"All of these items—energy, waste, forestry, sustainable agriculture, water, human rights, and sustainable development—these have to be popularized with the candidates," said Garganera. "We are entering a social contract with these leaders when we sign our name on the ballot box on May 9. We are contracting them to serve us and we would like the green scorecard to be a part of that contract and hopefully we, as good citizens, can be better in monitoring and being part of the solution," he said.

The roundtable, which discussed the environmental issues that the next set of leaders of the country should focus on, was also attended by Ten Knots director of sustainability Mariglo Laririt, United Ilijan Agricultural Workers for Sustainable Development president Rodel Cadigal, WWF-PH National Youth Council member and ASEAN Youth Advocates founder Mirus Ponon, and WWF-PH child ambassador Xia Vigor.

The virtual roundtable was held 7:30 p.m. before the global [switching off of lights](#) from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.



According to Earth Hour, with this year's theme "Shape Our Future," it aims to be a platform to encourage and mobilize collective action for the environment by educating and inspiring everyone, especially government leaders, to act for nature and climate.

GMA supported this year's [Earth Hour](#) celebration, which is spearheaded by WWF Philippines. – RC, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/826422/next-leaders-urged-to-prioritize-environmental-issues/story/?fbclid=IwAR18oJ4ayIFPkkolra7QRcYDN0AGaUi0gHK0cZtLyJzTXqCBNsThMxjBgkE>



Nayong Pilipino to transform 9.5-ha land into urban green space

March 26, 2022, 3:18 pm



Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) Deputy Executive Director for Operations, Dr. Jovertlee Pudan (left to right), NPF Board of Trustee Atty. Judy A. Lardizabal, NPF Executive Director Gertie Duran-Batocabe, Major Wilfredo Ponceja of AFP-RJT NCR, NPF Deputy Executive Director Joyce Ann Caigas, Sgt. Rafael Pagulayan of AFP-RJT NCR. (NPF photo)

MANILA – To create an urban green space within the Entertainment City in Parañaque City, the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) organized a tree planting activity on Friday on the occasion of National Women’s Month.

In her speech, NPF Executive Director Gertie Duran-Batocabe emphasized that creating more green spaces should be part of the new normal.

“As you all know, the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered important conversations about the importance of urban green spaces and how those should be designed to benefit the health and well-being of the populace,” she said.

Last year, NPF opened its doors to host the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) quarantine facility and a mega vaccination facility to support the national government’s Covid-19 pandemic response.

“While we are more than happy to contribute to the pandemic response, it is our dream to transform this 9.5-hectare property into a Cultural Park and Creative Hub nestled within an urban forest, incorporating the 30% built space and 70% green space design scheme,” Duran-Batocabe added.

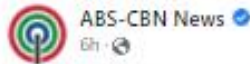
Under “Project Sambayanihan”, a series of activation projects for the physical development of the said property will commence throughout the year, including a series of planting activities that aims to plant 446 trees.

During the activity, seedlings of flowering trees namely Palawan Cherry and Bolong Eta were planted to honor women.

“Trees provide a foundation for life to flourish. They’re life-giver and sustainers. In the same way, we, women, provide a foundation for our families and communities with our innate ability to nurture and protect,” said Duran-Batocabe.

With these efforts, the NPF executive director is confident, that in no time, with each and everyone’s hard work, Nayong Pilipino will be open to the public again. **(PR)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1170712>



Dalawang green sea turtle na nalambat ang ibinalik sa dagat ng mga miyembro ng pulisya at mga opisyal ng Barangay Poblacion sa Hamtic, Antique noong Marso 14.

Isang barn owl naman ang nasagip sa Barangay Poblacion, Tabuc sa Maayon, Capiz noong Mar. 15. Nasagip ito ng isang residenteng nakitang hinahabol ito ng isang pusa sa tapat ng kanilang bahay. Nasa pangangalaga na ng Provincial Veterinary Office ang kuwago at nakatakdang pakawalan kapag gumaling na. (📷: Hamtic PNP; CAPENRO) | via Rolen Escaniel

BASAHA ang mga kaugnay na ulat: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/patrol/tag/PAWIKAN>



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Guterres warns vs ‘sleepwalking to climate catastrophe’

Published 6 hours ago on March 27, 2022 01:10 AM

By **TDI** @tribunephil



Emissions from a power plant in Koln, Germany. UN photo

The goal to limit future warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, highlighted in the Paris Agreement on climate change and driven home in last November’s COP26 gathering in Glasgow, is now on “life support” and “in intensive care,” the United Nations (UN) chief told the Economist Sustainability Summit.

Speaking via video link, UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted some of the progress made at COP 26 last year, but, pointing to “the enormous emissions gap,” conceded that “the main problem was not solved — it was not even properly addressed.”

“Keeping 1.5 alive requires a 45 percent reduction in global emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by mid-century,” he said, highlighting how Russia’s invasion of Ukraine threatened to become a huge setback for the concerted effort to speed up climate action.

According to current national commitments, however, global emissions are set to increase by almost 14 percent during the rest of the decade.

Last year alone, global energy-related CO2 emissions grew by six percent “to their highest levels in history,” Guterres said, as coal emissions surged “to record highs.”

With the planet warming by as much as 1.2 degrees, and where climate disasters have forced 30 million to flee their homes, Guterres warned: “We are sleepwalking to climate catastrophe.”



Epson SEA, WWF partner for the region's sustainability

BYRIZAL RAOUL REYES MARCH 27, 2022

Epson Southeast Asia announced recently its partnership with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as part of the Japan-based company's commitment to co-create sustainable solutions and empower communities.

In an online news briefing on March 18, Siew Jin Kiat, regional managing director of Epson Southeast Asia, told journalists from the region that the new partnership seeks to scale marine conservation impact and climate solutions across Southeast Asia by working with youths, citizen scientists, as well as businesses and local communities.

"Sustainability has been and will continue to be a core focus for Epson as part of our renewed Epson 25 Corporate Vision," Jin Kiat said.

"Beyond our ongoing efforts to deliver sustainable technology and solutions to our customers and partners, we are extremely proud to be extending this focus on sustainability to the places we operate in by co-creating a myriad of eco-innovative solutions with WWF and local communities to truly make an impact on a greener tomorrow," he added.

Jien Kiat said Epson is supporting WWF in order to scale coral restoration efforts in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, as well as mangrove restoration in the Philippines to sustain the Coral Triangle, that is acknowledged as the Earth's epicenter of marine biodiversity.

Moreover, he said saving the Coral Triangle is important because it hosts 76 percent of the world's coral species and the most mangrove-rich areas on the planet and over 6,000 species of fish.

As a key part of Southeast Asia, and extending south toward the Pacific, Jien Kiat pointed out that marine and coastal resources from the Coral Triangle directly sustain the food and livelihoods of over 130 million people, with billions more tracing their food sources to this region.

"Yet, decades of overfishing, unsustainable tourism and urbanization, and the climate crisis threaten to destroy the critical marine and coastal habitats in and around the Coral Triangle," he said.

He said working with the local stakeholders and institutions is important to ensure these restoration efforts', aim to support and restore the critically important marine ecosystem health that people all depend on, while, at the same time, building capacity among local communities as key stakeholders in the long-term maintenance and management of their coastal resources.

For the Philippines, the company said it is a "globally significant biogeographic unit of the Coral Triangle." It said mangrove conservation is of utmost importance for the protection of marine ecosystem services and vulnerable coastal communities.

It is estimated that nearly 80 percent of global fish catches depend on mangrove sites. Moreover, mangrove ecosystems protect coastal communities from wave action and storms, helping to prevent loss of life, property damage and soil erosion.

Jie Kien said increasingly intense natural disasters, coastal reclamation and overexploitation of resources has led to a deterioration in mangrove sites and consequent rapid decline in fish stocks.



He said more than half of the Philippines original mangrove cover has been lost within the last century. The result has indicated a significant impact on the human wellbeing and livelihoods of coastal communities in the area.

In this regard, the company will support WWF to work with local communities to restore several mangrove sites in southern Palawan.

Epson said local capacity building efforts will focus on mangrove restoration and protection, including seed planting, monitoring and assessment, coastal resource management planning, and more.

To ensure the longevity of restoration efforts by coastal communities, Epson will support WWF to establish a Community Learning and Innovation Hub focused on mangrove restoration. This is part of a network that empowers communities to sustain capacity building, share best practices, and exchange practitioner knowledge.

“Lasting conservation impact is achieved through collaboration with sincere partners,” said WWF-Singapore CEO R. Raghunathan.

“We look forward to working closely with Epson that is committed to real climate action and to drive meaningful efforts to ensure that conservation of our environment is in tandem with economic empowerment and humans living in harmony with nature,” Raghunathan said.

We're worried about a tipping point in how ecosystems absorb carbon

The biggest carbon dioxide sinks in Australia are at risk of collapse, based on the latest trends.



Australian drylands viewed from the air. Image: [UNE Photos](#), [CC BY-NC-ND 3.0](#)

By Caitlin Moore, David Campbell, Helen Cleugh, Jamie Cleverly, Jason Beringer, Lindsay Hutley and Mark Grant March 26, 2022

From rainforests to savannas, ecosystems on land absorb [almost 30 per cent](#) of the carbon dioxide human activities release into the atmosphere. These ecosystems are critical to stop the planet warming beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius this century – but climate change may be weakening their capacity to offset global emissions.

This is a key issue that [OzFlux](#), a research network from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, has been investigating for the past 20 years. Over this time, we've identified which ecosystems absorb the most carbon, and have been learning how they respond to extreme weather and climate events such as drought, floods and bushfires.

The biggest absorbers of atmospheric carbon dioxide in Australia are savannas and temperate forests. But as the effects of climate change intensify, ecosystems such as these are at risk of reaching tipping points of [collapse](#).

In our latest [research paper](#), we look back at the two decades of OzFlux's findings. So far, the ecosystems we studied are showing resilience by rapidly pivoting back to being carbon sinks after a disturbance. This can be seen, for example, in leaves growing back on trees soon after bushfire.

But how long will this resilience remain? As climate change pressures intensify, evidence suggests carbon sinks may lose their ability to bounce back from climate-related disasters. This reveals vital gaps in our knowledge.

Australian ecosystems absorb 150 million tonnes of carbon each year

Between 2011 and 2020, land-based ecosystems sequestered [11.2 billion tonnes](#), or 29 per cent, of global CO₂ emissions. To put this into perspective, that's [roughly similar](#) to the amount China emitted in 2021.

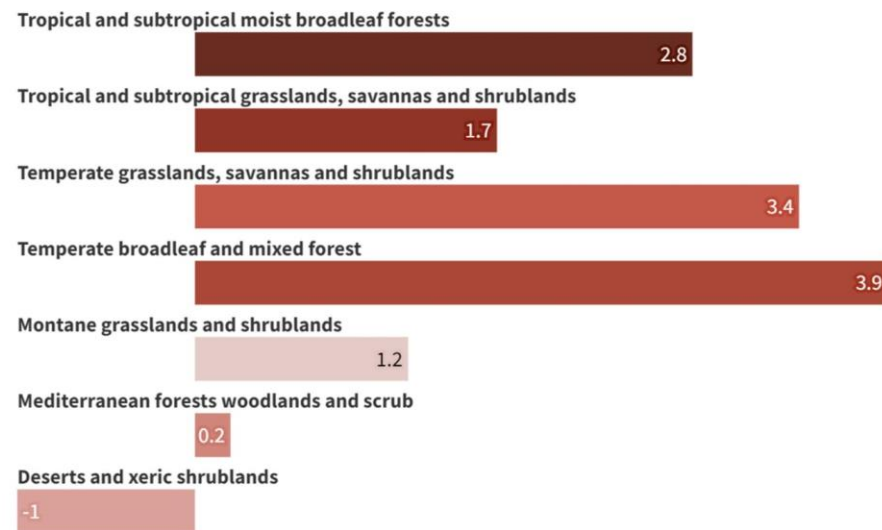
OzFlux has enabled the first comprehensive assessment of [Australia's carbon budget](#) from 1990 to 2011. This found Australia's land-based ecosystems accumulate some 150 million tonnes of CO₂ each year on average – helping to offset national fossil fuel emissions by around one third.

For example, every hectare of Australia's temperate forests absorbs 3.9 tonnes of carbon in a year, [according to OzFlux data](#). Likewise, every hectare of Australia's savanna absorbs 3.4 tonnes of carbon. This is about 100 times larger than a hectare of Mediterranean woodland or shrubland.



Tonnes of carbon absorbed by one hectare of Australian ecosystems, every year

Based on two decades of OzFlux's findings



Source: Beringer et al, 2016

Made with Flourish

Australia's carbon sinks. Image: [The Conversation](#).

But it's important to note that the amount of carbon Australian ecosystems can sequester fluctuates widely from one year to the next. This is due to, for instance, natural climate variability such as in La Niña or El Niño years, and disturbances such as fire and land use changes.

In any case, it's clear these ecosystems will play an important role in Australia reaching its target of net-zero emissions by 2050. But how effective will they continue to be as the climate changes?

How climate change weakens these carbon sinks

Extreme climate variability – [flooding rains](#), [droughts](#) and [heatwaves](#) – along with bushfires and land clearing, can weaken these carbon sinks.

While many Australian ecosystems show resilience to these stresses, we found their recovery time may be shortening due to more frequent and extreme events, potentially compromising their long-term contribution towards offsetting emissions.

Take bushfire as an example. When it burns a forest, the carbon stored in the plants is released back into the atmosphere as smoke – so the ecosystem becomes a carbon source. Likewise, under drought or heatwave conditions, water available to the roots becomes depleted and limits photosynthesis, which can tip a forest's carbon budget from being a sink to a carbon source.

If that drought or heatwave endures for a long time, or a bushfire returns before the forest has recovered, its ability to regain its carbon sink status is at risk.

Learning how carbon sinks may shift in Australia and New Zealand can have a global impact. Both countries are home to a broad range of climates – from the wet tropics, to the Mediterranean climate of southwest Australia, to the temperate climate in the southeast.

Our unique ecosystems have evolved to suit these diverse climates, which are underrepresented in the global network.

This means long-term ecosystem observatories – [OzFlux](#), along with the [Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network](#) – provide a vital natural laboratory for understanding ecosystems in this era of accelerating climate change.

Over its 20 years, OzFlux has made crucial contributions to the international understanding of climate change. A few of its major findings include:

- The 2011 La Niña event led to a [greening of interior Australia](#), with ecosystems flourishing from increased water availability,
- [Heatwaves](#) can negate the carbon sink strength of our ecosystems, and even lead to carbon emissions from plants,
- [Land clearing](#) and the [draining of peatland](#) systems add to Australia's and New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions.

Critical questions remain

Plans in Australia and New Zealand to reach net zero emissions by 2050 strongly depend on the ongoing ability for ecosystems to sequester emissions from industry, agriculture, transport and the electricity sectors.

While some management and technological innovations are underway to address this, such as in the [agricultural sector](#), we need long-term measurements of carbon cycling to truly understand the [limits of ecosystems](#) and their [risk of collapse](#).

Indeed, we're already in uncharted territory under climate change. Weather extremes from [heatwaves](#) to heavy rainfall are becoming more frequent and intense. And CO₂ levels are more than [50 per cent higher](#) than they were 200 years ago.

So while our ecosystems have remained a net sink over the [last 20 years](#), it's worth asking:

- Will they continue to do the heavy-lifting required to keep both countries on track to meet their climate targets?
- How do we protect, restore and sustain the most vital, yet vulnerable, ecosystems, such as "[coastal blue carbon](#)" (including seagrasses and mangroves)? These are critical to nature-based solutions to climate change.
- How do we monitor and verify national carbon accounting schemes, such as Australia's [Emissions Reduction Fund](#)?

Critical questions remain about how well Australia's and New Zealand's ecosystems can continue storing CO₂.

Caitlin Moore is a research fellow at the University of Western Australia. David Campbell is an associate professor at the University of Waikato. Helen Cleugh is a honorary professor at the Australian National University. Jamie Cleverly is a senior research fellow in environmental sciences at James Cook University. Jason Beringer is a professor at the University of Western Australia. Lindsay Hutley is a professor of environmental science at Charles Darwin University. Mark Grant is a science communication and engagement manager at the University of Queensland.

This article was originally published on [The Conversation](#).



Taal Volcano alert raised to Level 3

By Ma. Cristina Arayata **March 26, 2022, 12:15 pm**



(Courtesy of Phivolcs)

MANILA – The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) on Saturday morning raised the alert status of Taal Volcano from Alert Level 2 (increasing unrest) to Alert Level 3 (magmatic unrest) due to magmatic intrusion at the main crater that may further drive succeeding eruptions.

In a bulletin as of 8 a.m., Phivolcs reported that at around 7:22 a.m., the main crater generated a short-lived phreatomagmatic burst which was followed by nearly continuous phreatomagmatic activity that generated plumes 1500 meters, accompanied by volcanic earthquake and infrasound signals.

"Magmatic intrusion is the rise of magma into shallower levels of the volcano, which can cause further explosions as the magma can explode because of gases inside it or when the magma interacts groundwater in the shallower levels of the volcano," Phivolcs director Renato Solidum Jr. told the Philippine News Agency in a text message.

Phivolcs strongly recommended that residents of Taal Volcano Island and the high-risk villages of Bilibinwang and Banyaga, Agoncillo and Boso-boso, Gulod, and eastern Bugaan East in Laurel, Batangas be evacuated due to the possible hazards of pyroclastic density currents and volcanic tsunami should stronger eruptions subsequently occur.

The entire Taal Volcano Island is a permanent danger zone. Entry into the island as well as high-risk barangays of Agoncillo and Laurel must be prohibited.

All activities on Taal Lake should not be allowed at this time.

Communities around the Taal Lake shores are advised to remain vigilant, take precautionary measures against possible airborne ash and vog and calmly prepare for possible evacuation should unrest intensify.

Civil aviation authorities must advise pilots to avoid flying over Taal Volcano Island as airborne ash and ballistic fragments from sudden explosions and pyroclastic density currents such as base surges may pose hazards to aircraft.

The volcano erupted on Jan. 12, 2020, two months before the Covid-19 pandemic, and caused widespread damage in several Batangas towns and Tagaytay City. Ashfall also reached as far as Metro Manila

In July 2021, at least five eruptions were recorded, with one raising the alert status to Level 3. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1170705>



Ashfall reported in Taal Volcano: Phivolcs

By Ma. Cristina Arayata [March 27, 2022, 12:10 am](#)



TAAL ERUPTION. Screenshot from footage of the phreatomagmatic eruption of the Taal Main Crater on Saturday morning (March 26, 2022). The eruption produced steam-laden grayish plumes that rose 3 kilometers and were accompanied by volcanic earthquakes and infrasound. *(Photo courtesy of Phivolcs)*

MANILA — Sulfur-smelling wet ashfall was reported in Taal Volcano and along a number of its surrounding shores in Batangas, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Saturday night.

"Sulfur-smelling wet ashfall was reported on Taal Volcano Island or TVI along the Calaut [in Balete] and Alas-as [in San Nicolas] shorelines and on the lakeshore of Banyaga, Agoncillo, Batangas," said Phivolcs in its eruption update.

This ashfall, the Department of Health (DOH) said in a separate advisory, may cause eye irritation, cough, bronchitis-like illness, discomfort while breathing, nose and throat irritation. It may also cause injuries due to roof collapse or vehicular accidents caused by slippery roads and poor visibility.

The DOH said those with asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis should avoid exposure to volcanic ash — the powder-sized particles that have been blown into the air by an erupting volcano.

The DOH likewise urged the affected individuals to minimize exposure to ashfall and stay indoors as much as possible. The use of N95 mask, goggles, or eyeglasses was also encouraged.

Phivolcs on Saturday raised the alert level status of the Taal Volcano, from Level 2 (increasing unrest) to Level 3 (magmatic unrest), following phreatomagmatic bursts recorded between 7:22 a.m. and 8:59 a.m. This generated plumes up to 3,000 meters high.

Phreatomagmatic eruptions are caused by the interaction of magma and water. Eruptions normally consist of multiple explosive events, the interval of which may vary.

"The activity was recorded by 11 of 16 seismic stations of the Taal Volcano Network as volcanic tremor events that lasted 5 and 86 minutes, and as many as 66 discrete explosions were detected by five of seven infrasound stations," Phivolcs said in the advisory.

There has been no further activity since the eruption ceased, it added.

Three low-frequency volcanic earthquakes and five volcanic tremor events that lasted two to three minutes for the subsequent observation period have so far been recorded.



Volcanic earthquakes are said to be caused by movements or eruptions of magma from the volcano.

Under Alert Level 3, there is magmatic intrusion at the main crater that may further drive succeeding eruptions.

Phivolcs director Renato Solidum earlier said this refers to the rise of magma into shallower levels of the volcano, which can cause further explosions as the magma can explode because of gases inside it or when the magma interacts with groundwater in the shallower levels of the volcano.

Phivolcs earlier suggested that those in the TVI and high-risk barangays of Bilibinwang and Banyaga in Agoncillo town, as well as Buso-Buso, Gulod, and eastern Bugaan East in Laurel town in Batangas be evacuated due to the possible hazards of pyroclastic density currents and volcanic tsunami should stronger eruptions subsequently occur.

Entry into TVI as well as high-risk barangays of Agoncillo and Laurel must be prohibited, and all activities on Taal Lake should not be allowed, Phivolcs added. **(PNA)**

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DOH sees rollout of fourth COVID vaccine dose in late April

Philstar.com March 26, 2022 | 2:43pm



A health worker prepares a dose of the BioNtech Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine during a vaccination for seafarers at a stadium in Manila on July 15, 2021.

AFP / Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — A fourth coronavirus vaccine shot may be coming into the arms of some Filipinos late next month, according to a Department of Health official overseeing the country's vaccination drive.

"We will begin this once the EUA (emergency use authorization) and the guidelines are approved. So we're estimating that maybe we can start in the last week of April," DOH undersecretary Myrna Cabotaje said Saturday partly in Filipino in a briefing aired over state-run People's Television.

Cabotaje said experts are recommending that a fourth vaccine dose be given to "high-risk and vulnerable groups," which include frontline healthcare workers, senior citizens and immunocompromised individuals.

For now, the DOH has applied with the Food and Drug Administration for an amendment to the EUA of selected vaccines which can be given as a fourth dose, or essentially a second booster shot.

Countries including France, Germany and Sweden as well as health authorities in England have recommended a fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose for the most vulnerable, including the elderly, who are at higher risk for severe illness from the disease.

Australia on Friday became the latest country to offer a fourth vaccine dose to people aged 65 and above, as a subvariant of Omicron races through the population.

The country's technical advisory group on immunization said Pfizer and Moderna were the preferred vaccines for the extra booster shot.

But there was as yet "insufficient evidence" of the benefits of a fourth dose for other groups in the broader population, it said in a statement. — **Xave Gregorio with AFP**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/03/26/2170054/doh-sees-rollout-fourth-covid-vaccine-dose-late-april>

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




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