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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Cimatu dedma sa pagsalaula sa Manila Bay

Kinakalampag ng mga mangingisda si Environment secretary Roy Cimatu dahil sa reklamasyong nagaganap sa dating Island Cove na tinatawag na nilang POGO island ngayon.

Ayon sa Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas, tila natutulog sa pansitan si Cimatu kaya't nagkakareklamasyon sa lugar kung saan nauna nang pinagpuputol ang mga bakawan. Si Cimatu ang chairman ng Manila Bay Task Force

na inatasan para linisin ang Manila Bay at hindi dumihan at tabunan ng lupa.

"We raise alarm over this dubious construction of a complex with reclamation activity," sabi ni Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap kahapon.

Pumapalag rin ang mga mangingisda sa pagsasawalang-bahala ng provincial government ng Cavite sa diumano'y pananakop ng China na umaabot na sa Manila Bay. Habang nawawalan ng kabuhayan ang mga Pilipinong mangingisda dahil pinapatay na ang karagatan. Bbibigyan naman ng trabaho ang 20,000 hanggang 50,000 mga Intsik na magtrabaho sa POGO island na ginagawa nang 32-ektaryang complex, sabi ng Pamalakaya.

Ayon kay Hicap, para lang din itong moro-moro na ginawa sa Boracay kung saan sinabing rehabilitasyon ng isla ang pakay ngunit pinaalis lang ang mga Pilipino para magbigay-daan sa mga Intsik. (Eileen Mencias)



SWAP PLASTICS FOR, WELL, PLASTICS

TO REDUCE TRASH, MANILA TRIES SCHEME KEEPING SACHETS 'IN A LOOP'

By Krixia Subingsubing
@krixiasINQ

In a bid to reduce the use of plastic sachets that end up choking the metro's waterways, a personal care company is offering residents of an urban poor community a unique incentive: Turn in the empty packets and get free products—packaged in similar single-use sachets.

The idea, said Lavin Gonzales, of Unilever's corporate communications, is "to keep the plastics in a loop."

Instead of throwing away the products they contain, consumers can instead keep and collect the plastic packets as part of the "Kolek, Kilo, Kita" (collect, weigh, earn) program launched on Saturday by the Manila city government, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Program, Unilever Philippines, Cemex and Republic Cement.

Targeted by the program is Tondo's Vitas community, where the mostly indigent families live near the industrial

shipyards lining Manila Bay.

Working mainly as scavengers, the residents here can only afford personal care products packaged in small plastic sachets often good for one or two uses. The empty sachets are usually thrown into open garbage dumps and are washed into the bay and surrounding waterways.

Instead of throwing away the single-use plastic, residents in Vitas, Tondo, can now collect the empty packets and exchange a kilo of them for P10 worth of Unilever products

packaged in similar sachets. This is often equivalent to two sachets of shampoo, or a small bar of soap.

Residents who receive free products in plastic sachets can then keep and save the empty sachets for the next collection.

Waste to energy

The plastic wastes will be collected monthly in a designated point for each barangay zone and turned over to Cemex and Republic Cement. The discarded plastic will be used in the com-

pany's waste-to-energy systems in a bid to switch from coal in its manufacturing process.

Corporate polluters

Unilever expressed hopes that the program would encourage consumers to collect the used sachets instead of discarding them as trash, knowing that they are equivalent to goods. The company believes that the program will help it achieve its 2025 goal of collecting more plastic than it is producing.

Unilever was among the

multinational companies flagged in a recent global audit as one of the world's top polluters, mainly because it packages most of its products in single-use sachets affordable to low-income economies like the Philippines.

The global audit report, titled Branded Volume II, aims to hold top corporate polluters accountable for their single-use packaging that harm the environment and for fostering a "disposable mentality" and "throwaway culture." INQ



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ON THE METRO WATER CRISIS Look into other sources, says Esperon

Esperon said that other sources can be tapped to raise the water level at Angat Dam

As the water crisis in the metropolis still being felt by its residents, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has enumerated short and long-term solutions that would help address the water shortage in Metro Manila.

During a press briefing in Malacañang, the security adviser said that while he acknowledged the likelihood of a water crisis in the country's metropolis when water concessionaires fail to develop other sources of water, it's still

not too late to look for other sources.

"Until that time that we won't be able to develop other resources, then we have the possibility of water shortages every now and then," said Esperon. "So, there are short-range programs, there are long-term programs."

This comes after water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water announced on Tuesday that there will be rotational water service interruptions beginning that day,

given the continued drop in Angat and Ipo dams' water level.

The concessionaires also warned that the water rationing may last until next year as water levels at Angat and Ipo dams, which are at 185.86 meters and 100.37 meters, respectively, continue to decline due to below normal rainfall in these areas.

Esperon noted that the two concessionaires could not rely on Angat Dam since it also supplies water to parts of Bulacan and Pampanga provinces, but cited that there can be other sources that can be tapped to raise the water

level in Angat Dam, citing the action made by the Ramos administration.

"Umiray River in Quezon Province, Aurora simply goes to the Pacific Ocean. So what did the Ramos Administration do then was to tap that water and put it to Angat Dam," Esperon said. "Now, if we are able to get more into Angat and develop, protect more the forest cover there, then we will get more water."

He also noted that concessionaires can also source water from Laguna Lake and disclosed a plan to get "100 million liters a day" from Laguna Lake, but it has yet to materialize.

Elmer N. Manuel



Angat Dam water level continues to drop

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

The water level in Angat Dam continued to fall as only 29 millimeters of rain flowed into the reservoir in October, an official of the state weather bureau said yesterday.

Ana Liza Solis, Climate Monitoring and Prediction Section chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), said this

is way below the forecast of 300 mm of rain for the month.

Solis told radio *dzBB* that only 10 percent or 29 mm of rain from the forecast 300 mm flowed into the Angat Dam reservoir from Oct. 1 to 25.

Solis, however, was quick to add that a low pressure area spotted early yesterday inside the Philippine area of responsibility is expected to bring rains, which will hope-

fully contribute additional water to the country's dams, including Angat Dam.

Based on the record of PAGASA Hydro-Meteorological Division, the water level at Angat Dam was at 185.41 mm as of 6 a.m. yesterday. This was 0.23 lower than the 185.64 mm recorded on Friday and was 24.59 mm below the 210 mm normal high water level of Angat Dam,

Solis admitted that about

900 mm to 1,000 mm of rain is needed to enter the reservoir to maintain the normal water level in Angat Dam by the end of the year.

Solis appealed to the public to conserve water and to stock up just enough for their daily needs as concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. started re-implementing rotational water service interruptions in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

The two concessionaires said the rotational water

service cut is part of their supply management efforts in preparation for next summer as water levels in Angat Dam and Ipo Dam remain low due to scant rainfall.

Water level at Ipo Dam was at 100.31 mm as of 6 a.m. yesterday - 0.69 below the 101 mm normal high water level and 0.03 lower than the 100.34 mm water level on Friday. Meanwhile, Bulacan Vice Gov. Wilhelmino Sy Alvarado suggested that the Bayabas Dam in Bulacan should be considered.

He also suggested tapping the water supply of Wawa Dam in Rodriguez, Rizal to augment Metro Manila's domestic water use.

This way, the Bayabas Dam can be tapped solely for the irrigation of Bulacan farmlands so Angat Dam's water may be dedicated for Metro Manila's domestic water use and power generation, he said.

Regarding Wawa Dam, Sevilla David Jr., executive director of the National Water Resources Board, said

it is included as part of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's medium- to long-term plan for Metro Manila's water supply.

On the other hand, Emelita Lingat, provincial environment officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Bulacan, explained there is now a bigger demand for raw water from Angat Dam for domestic water consumption of Metro Manila residents due to its growing population.

-Ramon Efren Lazaro



Editorial

Poor service merits probe of Maynilad, Manila Water

WE support calls to review the contracts that have been awarded to the water utilities Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. The probe should also cover their regulator, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). But we do not necessarily agree with Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go that the matter be referred to his former boss, Mr. Rodrigo Duterte. Not all of the nation's problems should land on the President's desk — at least not yet. For now, the neophyte lawmaker himself can champion the issue at the Senate. At times, the Senate seems to investigate trivial matters only for the sake of senators getting media exposure. But the water shortages of late and the water utilities themselves certainly merit public scrutiny.

Like Senator Go, many were apoplectic over the announcement of the rotational service interruption after the water level at Angat Dam fell below critical level. Earlier this year, households were also inconvenienced with service interruptions that were ineffectively advised to the public beforehand. Actually, those interruptions have become a recurring crisis, particularly during the summer. Ironically, the season that follows brings in typhoons and monsoon rains that trigger flooding and natural disasters.

On top of the poor service, Manila Water alarmed people when it announced that water rates might spike 780 percent after the Supreme Court decided that it and Maynilad had violated the 2004 Clean Water Act. The statement sounded like blackmail. The high court ordered them and MWSS to pay around P2 billion in fines for failing to deliver the sewerage lines that were a condition in winning the utilities' respective concession bids. Despite the undeliverables, Maynilad and Manila Water had been collecting fees from consumers for sewer treatment services. One estimate says the two utilities may have collected P60 billion for the facilities that they have not yet built, although we expect those firms to contest that figure.

Senator Go should consider convening a summit to discuss our water problem and solicit proposals to effectively resolve it. Delegates there could look at several alternatives, even extreme ones like nationalizing the water distribution services. Only then would it be timely for the senator to see the President, with the best short- and long-term alternatives at hand.

Obvious solution

If that summit were to happen, we hope that people there could review the pros and cons of constructing Kaliwa Dam. Even if it can serve Metro Manila's growing needs for water, it threatens to exact a heavy toll. The Dumagats would be displaced as their ancestral lands are flooded; so, too, would many other Filipinos. Plus, part of the already diminished Sierra Madre and home of the Philippine Eagle would be destroyed. We doubt that Kaliwa is worth the price.

Instead, the government should look at the more obvious source — Laguna de Bay. It is already being tapped for drinking water, but it has the potential to supply even more.

Of course, much work needs to be done before we can maximize that lake, which happens to be one of the largest freshwater sources in Southeast Asia. Laguna de Bay has a surface area of more than 900,000 square kilometers. In contrast, the Angat Watershed has a surface area of only about 570 square kilometers. Just imagine how much more rainwater Laguna de Bay can harvest.

To be effective, though, the authorities have to clamp down on land reclamation allegedly done by some property developers. Also, there ought to be a serious enforcement of laws that govern and restrict the operation of fish pens. We need to find a better balance of our needs for freshwater fish and for potable water.

Moreover, the authorities should look into dredging the lake. Despite its massive area, its average depth is only around 2.5 meters (about 8 feet). And of course, there should be a program that mitigate a siltation such as a reforestation of the mountains and other areas around the lake.

Granted, what we mention here would be a grand undertaking. But the problem is complex and the solutions should be comprehensive, maybe even radical. Palliatives only prolong agony.



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DENR presses move to save Tamaraw

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has lined up programs to save the Tamaraw which is now considered as critically endangered with only 480 heads remaining.

In its effort to save the Tamaraw from extinction, the DENR through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and partners will launch and screen the documentary film called "Suwag or Suko" on Wednesday (Oct. 30).

The film showing will be held at the National Museum of the Philippines in P. Burgos Drive, Rizal Park, Manila from 1 - 5 p.m. that coincides with the celebration of the Tamaraw Month.

Joel dela Torre



Manila LGU, various orgs launch waste collection campaign

THE City Government of Manila, in partnership with various organizations, launched on Saturday the "Kolek, Kilo and Kita" (Collect, Weigh and Earn) program that allows residents to exchange their collected plastic wastes for staple household items.

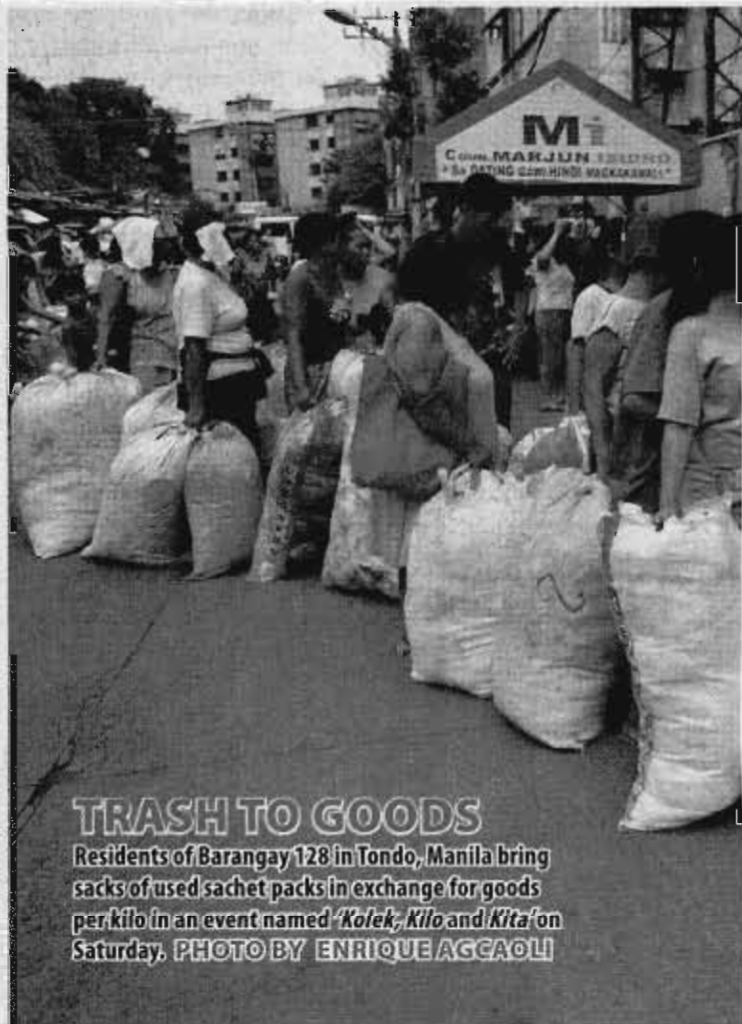
The launch was conducted simultaneously in Balut, Tondo and Punta, Sta. Ana.

In the program, residents can exchange plastic wastes such as shampoo sachets, candy wrappers and junk food packaging. Plastic bottles, however, will not be accepted.

In coordination with Unilever Philippines, every kilo of plastic wastes will be exchanged for P10 worth of their products such as fabric softeners, detergents and shampoo.

"Lahat ng plastic sa mga bahay ay pwede nilang i-surrender na kikiluhin, tapos for every kilo merong corresponding na P10 worth na ibibigay sa kanila na products (They can collect plastic wastes from their homes, which we will weigh. Every kilo of waste, will be exchanged with P10 worth of products)," Vice Mayor Maria Shielah Lacuna said.

Benjie Yap, Unilever Philippines' chairman and chief executive officer, said the organizations will collect and process plastic



TRASH TO GOODS
Residents of Barangay 128 in Tondo, Manila bring sacks of used sachet packs in exchange for goods per kilo in an event named 'Kolek, Kilo and Kita' on Saturday. PHOTO BY ENRIQUE AGCAOLI

wastes more than their sales by year 2025 as their commitment to the environment.

The collected garbage will be turned over to Republic Cement

Services Inc., which will then use it as an alternative to fuel the Kilm that processes cement.

"Yan ay dadalhin sa planta namin ishe-shred at gagawin nam-



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Manila LGU, - - - - -



ing alternative fuel. *Imbis na coal, 'yan ang gagamitin namin* (The collected plastic will be brought to our plant, where it will be shredded and used as an alternative

fuel. Instead of using coal, we will use the [plastic wastes])," Renato Sunico, Republic Cement Services Inc. president, said.

JOSHUA VERA CRUZ



Kilo-kilong basurang plastik, gagamiting pangkabuhayan sa Maynila

INILUNSA ng pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila sa pamumuno ni Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso ang programang "Kolek, Kilo, Kita para sa Walastik na Maynila" na ang layunin ay mapanatili ang kalinisan, kalikasan, at mabigyan ng tulong-kabuhayan ang mga Manileno kung saan pinasinayaan ito kahapon ng umaga sa Vitas, Tondo.

Katuwang ng pamahalaang lungsod ng Maynila sa nasabing programa ang Unilever Philippines, Pasig River Rehabilitation Center, Cemex at Republic Cement kung saan sa kanilang pakikipagtulungan ay matutugunan ang isyu tungkol sa mga uri ng plastic na sa kasalukuyan ay hindi nakokolekta tulad na lang ng mga sirang plastic bag, pambalot ng kendi, sabon, shampoo at iba pang pakete na gawa sa "light plastics."

Ayon kay Barangay 128 Chairman Bobby Hermosa, malaki ang maitutulong ng nasabing programa hindi lamang sa kapaligiran kundi maging sa mga residente dahil ang mga ma-

kokolekta nilang plastic ay may kapalit na produkto mula sa Unilever.

Ayon naman kay Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna, na siyang kumatawan kay Domagoso, ang mga makokolektang light plastic ay kukunin ng Unilever sa barangay saka dadalhin naman sa Cemex at Republic Cement upang gamitin bilang alternative fuel.

Dagdag pa ni Lacuna, ang bawat kilo ng basura ay may kapalit namang produkto na ibibigay ang Unilever na maaari nilang magamit sa pang-araw-araw nilang pangangalangan.

Napag-alaman naman kay Renato Sunico, presidente ng Republic Cement, na mayroon silang makina na gagamitin upang madurog ang mga plastik upang gawing alternative fuel imbes na uing dahil bukod pa sa makatitipid sila ay nakatutulong pa ito sa kalikasan.

Sa halip aniya na dalhin sa landfill, nagagamit ang basura bilang alternatibong materyales sa paggawa ng semento. Ito aniya ay isa sa mga ligtas at kontroladong paraan upang siguruhin ang mga plastik ay hindi magiging sanhi ng polusyon sa dagat o hangin.

Hinikayat naman ni Unilever Philippines Chairman at CEO Benjie Yap ang iba pang kompanya na makipagtulungan sa programa ng lungsod ng Maynila upang magkaroon ng dagdag-kabuhayan ang mga residente at mapanumbalik ang kalinisan sa kapaligiran.

Palaawakin pa ang nasabing programa upang maresolba ang problema ng basura sa lungsod kung saan una nang nanawagan sa mga Manileno ang alkalde na maglinis sa kasada, kabahayan upang mapanatiling malinis ang Maynila.

JAY REYES



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Baguio moratorium on tree-cutting, construction

The effect of the moratorium would be prospective. It does not count those that were already started

By Aldwin Quidasol

BAGUIO CITY – City executives began preparations on the ground for the implementation of an executive order imposing a moratorium on the construction of commercial buildings and tree-cutting in the country's summer capital.

Mayor Benjamin Magalong, who pushed for the moratorium in view of the environmental issues being faced by the city, said he expects the local government to formulate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to achieve the objectives of the moratorium.

According to him, the President approved the proposal in principle and the documentary requirements for the moratorium order are now being prepared by the Department of the Interior and Local Government under Secretary Eduardo Año.

City Administrator Bonifacio de la Peña said, however, that there is a need to convene all the concerned offices and study on the possible IRR content as concerns have started to crop up in relation to the moratorium.

One is that the City Buildings and Architecture Office, which conducts processing of permits for constructions, should continue to accept and process applications for said permits while the order is not yet issued. But upon issuance of the moratorium, no new applications will be accepted.

"The effect of the moratorium would be prospective. It does not count those that were already started," Assistant City Legal Officer Melchor Carlos Rabanes explained.

Magalong added that it was proposed to cover the construction of commercial buildings and cutting of trees for one year and to include a funding component to enable the city to implement rehabilitative programs particularly on the upgrading and expansion of its sewerage treatment system.



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Baguio Moratorium on tree-cutting, unstructured



For the environment The moratorium pushed by Baguio mayor Benjamin Magalong is expected to address the city's environmental issues.

ALDWIN QUITASOL



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LAND ROWS STALL
REHAB OF BORACAY
FOREST, WETLANDS



ORATON/CONTRIBUTOR

Land rows stalling rehab of Boracay forest, wetlands

SPECIAL REPORT

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@nestorburgosINQ

(Second of three parts)

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—The recovery of at least five of the nine wetlands here was part of the focus of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) when the island was closed to tourists from April 26 to Oct. 25, 2018.

Wetlands help prevent or minimize flooding by acting as a sponge for excess water. Many of Boracay's wetlands have been covered by developers or used for the illegal dumping of wastewater and solid waste.

Their poor state is considered one of the causes of flooding on the island.

Boracay's nine wetlands comprise a total of 37.81 hectares. Eight are in forest lands, and one is in an area categorized as alienable and disposable, according to the BIATF-drafted Boracay Action Plan.

According to the report of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), 548 structures, of which 455 are residential, are encroaching on the wetlands. At least 85

percent of those living there returned to their places of origin during the shutdown of the island.

Eighty-five houses identified by the DENR as illegally occupying Wetland No. 6 in Barangay Manoc-Manoc were demolished in May 2018.

Five of the nine wetlands have been adopted for rehabilitation and development by private companies under separate memorandums of agreement with the DENR.

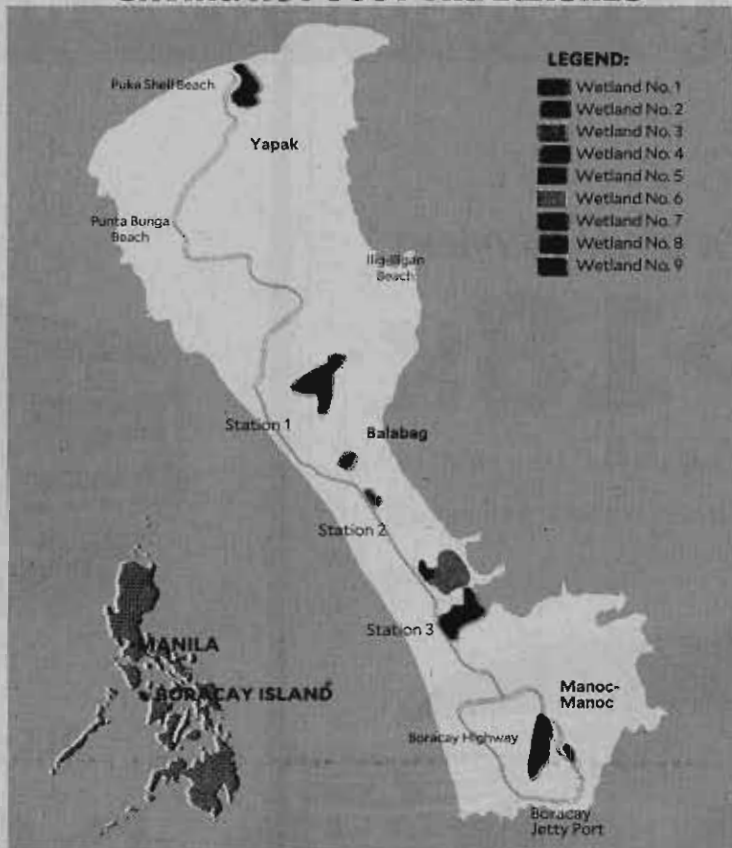
The projects that are being implemented in phases involve the restoration of wetlands and their development into linear parks or ecotourism areas.

Still there

The companies that are funding and undertaking the wetlands' rehabilitation and development are the Lopez-led Energy Development Corp. (Wetland No. 2), San Miguel Corp. (Wetland No. 3), Aboitiz Equity Ventures (Wetland No. 4), the Lucio Tan-controlled Boracay Tubi System Inc. (Wetland No. 6) and the Gokongwei-led JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. (Wetland No. 8).

Almost a year after Boracay's reopening to tourists, most of the 885 structures earlier identified by the DENR as illegally built in forest lands have not been removed.

SAVING NOT JUST THE BEACHES



SOURCE: DENR-VI

GRAPHICS

Natividad Bernardino, general manager of the Boracay Interagency Rehabilitation Management Group, which manages the rehabilitation efforts, said

complaints had been filed against the property owners and claimants for unlawful occupation of forest land.

The BIATF has also identi-



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Land rows stalling rehab of Boracay forest, wetlands

fied an area on the island that will serve as a permanent relocation site for residents removed from wetlands.

At Bulabog beach on the eastern side of the island, a number of residential and commercial structures identified by the BIATF as violating the 30-meter beach easement have yet to be removed.

Bernardino said that as of Oct. 11, eight of 28 commercial and residential buildings in violation of beach easement had not complied with demolition orders issued by the local government of Malay.

She said the structure owners were contesting the demolition order and had filed an appeal at the Office of the President.

Almost done

Property owners, including expatriates, are contesting the delineation of easement, saying they were previously granted permits and clearances by national government agencies and the local government.

Many of the owners have invested their life savings in their properties.

On the other hand, the removal of structures encroaching on the easement of the main road from the Cagban jetty in Barangay Manoc-Manoc to

CityMall in Barangay Yapak is almost completed.

Bernardino said the remaining overhangs of 19 buildings along the road were being demolished.

The BIATF identified around 1,400 structures encroaching on the island's road network easement before the island was shut down. At least half were removed when the island reopened.

Bernardino said an inventory would still be conducted for an updated figure of the structures that needed to be demolished.

But some property owners believe that their rights have been violated by the demolition of structures or by government officials pressuring them to raze their properties themselves. They have filed or are planning to file criminal and administrative complaints against personnel of the DENR, Department of Tourism and Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Said a property owner who asked not to be named: "Most of us were afraid because of the heavy-handed measures they imposed during the closure. We have no choice, and we are also protecting our businesses. But they forget that [President] Duterte will not be in power forever." INQ

(To be concluded)