



**Ecosystems Management Team --- ridge to reef restoration to meet cultural needs**

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## Professional Intern Program

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For years Pacific island foresters have asked for scholarships and training to create the next generation of foresters, with a foundation in science education, technical abilities, project management skills, and the capacity for community leadership. The ideas, experience and desires of many people have been shared and finally coalesced into an action plan. Because the proposal not only provided training for individuals but also addressed partnerships and institution-building, it quickly won broad support. IPIF coordinated five state foresters to secure funding. Ultimately, six conservation organizations and eight college campuses have been formally involved in the process through cooperative agreements and/or course enrollment. US Forest Service State and Private Forestry “competitive” and carryover funding, with matching support from IPIF and multiple partners, provide for the next two years’ activities. The continuing swell of enthusiasm and support for the program encourages us to plan its evolution and seek funding for continuation.

The core activities for the Professional Intern Program are:

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| Fall<br>2008   | Eighteen nominees, with preparation at community colleges as needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Biology or agriculture, chemistry, English, and algebra</li></ul>  |
| Spring<br>2009 | Ten interns will take courses at Hawaii Community College (HCC) and UH/Hilo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Restoration Practicum (with Karen Bennett)</li><li>• Tropical Silviculture &amp; Forest Plant Propagation</li><li>• Surveying, Inventorying and Monitoring</li><li>• Watershed Management (with Karen Bennett and Rich MacKenzie)</li></ul>                          |
| 2009-2010      | “Focus projects” on home islands. IPIF staff will mentor interns through a holistic resource condition assessment, strategic project planning, project design and management through the implementation and monitoring phases. The entire process will occur as a model of a “participatory approach” to resource management where communities are involved in every step of the process. |

*Chuuk, Yap and Republic of the Marshall Islands* are involved only in the first core activity of the Professional Intern Program at this time. Forestry staff are funded to participate in continuing education at home-island community colleges, to enhance staff abilities and to prepare them for future, advanced training.

*Hawaii Division of Forestry and Wildlife* employees are now eligible to take courses at any UH campus to enhance professional qualifications and institutional abilities in natural resource management due to the Professional Interns Program cooperative agreement with UH. This agreement overcomes historical state constraints on the ability of state employees to avail of UH instruction.

Benefits already realized by the program include:

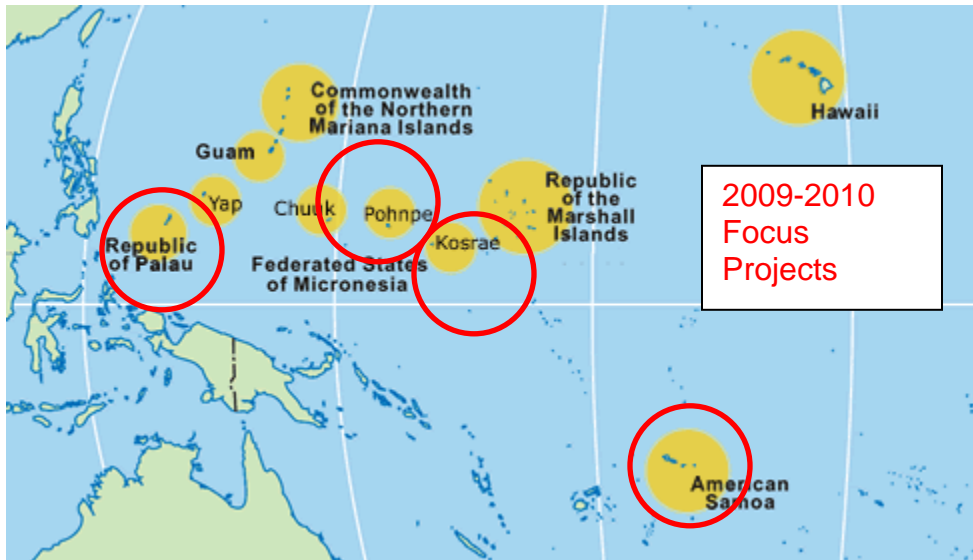
- Enhanced basic educational background of forestry staff. The program is establishing a new precedent for staff to avail of community college educational resources.
- Team-building between government and non-government forestry and conservation groups. Palau, Kosrae and Pohnpei are fielding multi-agency “teams,” taking courses and planning focus projects together. Increased cooperation is already apparent.
- Enhanced curricula at Pacific colleges. The UHH Watershed Management course is being created for the Professional Internship program this year, and is expected to be continued in the future. The HCC Forest Management Practicum course is being expanded to focus on the entire process of assessing, designing, and implementing a restoration project. Curricular materials from UH/Professional Internships courses will be provided to island community colleges, and seed funding is provided for inter-college dialogue on potential distance education.
- Competitive recruitment of interns. While most nominees are already on staff, in one-three cases a new position is being created by island agencies and the Professional Internships program is being used as a recruitment and entry training tool. These nominees have Associate’s degrees, and represent a significant step up in entry-level qualifications and interest on the part of applicants to island forestry agencies.

Benefits to be realized as the “Focus Projects” get underway will include not only natural resource and project management skills through on-the-job mentoring, but also on-the-ground project accomplishments.

- Palau: The focus project will be part of a larger project to restore the watershed of Lake Ngardok, a wetland recognized under the Ramsar Convention. This project will be a cooperative venture with the fledgling Babeldaob Watershed Alliance and serve as a demonstration site for other states in Babeldaob, with the intent of designing holistic restoration projects and drawing more states into the Alliance.
- Pohnpei: The focus project will address community forest management in the Pohnpei Watershed Reserve. In those communities that have agreed to recognize the reserve, positive work to restore former sakau (*Piper methysticum*) clearings and restore stream conditions can support the long-term effort to complete the Reserve boundary demarcation.
- Kosrae: the intern team will address watershed management, using the Yela watershed as a reference ecosystem, as its water quality is characteristic of essentially undisturbed

system. An on-the-ground project will improve watershed conditions in Olum watershed, which supplies municipal drinking water.

- American Samoa: interns will develop and evaluate an agroforestry project on private lands as a demonstration of economically viable, culturally acceptable, effective method of working forest land management to protect watershed characteristics on sloping land.



**Partner Organizations:**

Palau Bureau of Agriculture Forestry Program, Palau Conservation Society, Babeldaob Watershed Alliance, FSM Department of Resources and Development, Pohnpei Division of Forestry and Marine Resources, Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Kosrae Island Resource Management Authority, Kosrae Conservation and Safety Program, Yela Environmental Landowners’ Authority, Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Resources and Development Agroforestry Program, American Samoa Community College Forestry Program, University of Hawaii - Hilo and Manoa campuses, Hawaii Community College, Yap Division of Forestry and Agriculture, College of Micronesia – all campuses, Palau Community College, The Nature Conservancy, Micronesia Conservation Trust, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

S&PF contribution	IPIF contribution	Partner contribution	Total Cost of Project
\$416,800	\$150,000	\$380,500	\$947,300