

KIBCA WINS HISTORIC COURT CASE

In a landmark ruling, the High Court supported KIBCA's application to halt Success Company from logging the Lolobo land at Lot 1 on southern Kolombangara, above Kuzi and Happi.

KIBCA believes this sets an important precedent for logging on Kolombangara and throughout the Solomons. It was the first time a landholders association has taken this type of action.

The logging was ruled invalid because the company did not have a forestry license from the Ministry of Forests nor a development consent from the Ministry for the Environment. To receive a development consent it is necessary for an environmental impact statement to be completed and to undertake local consultation. The court ruled that this had not occurred.

Logging must now cease across the entire Lot 1 logging operation.

KIBCA took the legal action to stop logging above 400m to honour the community conservation agreement that landholders made in 2009. The agreement allows KIBCA to receive funds for a five-year scholarship program that provided 73 scholarships worth \$61,000 in 2010.

KIBCA was overwhelmed by people congratulations us for the win. Over 100 local landholders from the Lolobo tribe had written to KIBCA confirming their opposition to logging.

This judgment should interest many landholders frustrated with the behavior of logging companies. KIBCA believes that there are few logging operations in Solomon Islands that follow the correct process.

Their now remains important questions about how the trust administrator for Lot 1 approved logging in the first place, and whether he received any personal benefits.

Visit www.kibca.org for KIBCA's media response to the ruling, delivered on 26 Nov 2010.

BODO DETTKE SACKED AS FORESTRY MINISTER

KIBCA was pleased to see the Danny Philips Government act to replace Bodo Dettke, owner of Success Company, as Forest Minister.

KIBCA stated to the Island Sun and Solomon Star that Mr Dettke would be unable to remove perceptions of bias and conflict of interest while he remained both Forests Minister and owner of Success Company, one of the country's largest logging companies.

KIBCA EXCLUSIVE – NEW CRATER LAKE FORMED

Wondered why the water in the Vila River that supplies Ringgi is regularly chocolate colored?

The answer was confirmed when KIBCA Technical Officer, Andrew Cox, visited the Kolombangara Crater with several other trekkers from KFPL.

To their surprise, the party found a large new rubble field blocking the Vila River for over 800m. It was formed in June after a small earthquake caused a landslide on the side of Mt Rano. The debris washed through a narrow side gorge before covering the Vila River.

Every time it rains heavily in the crater, the loose rubble field is washed further down the Vila River.



Looking up Vila River at debris field coming from creek on left.

The rubble also blocks the Vila River as it leaves the crater through the main gorge. This new 400m long pool now means that a long swim through the 4m deep pool is necessary to reach the centre of the crater.



Side creek (far right) brings silt from Mt Rano landslide and blocks Vila River. Lower end of new 400m pool in foreground. Earlier in the year this section of river was free-flowing. If you want to see the new pool, you had better be quick! We expect summer rains to remove the blockage in the coming months. (continued over)

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The upper end of the new 400m pool on the Vila River blocking the entrance to Kolombangara Crater. It is now only possible to reach inside the crater by swimming the length of the deep pool.

IMBU RANO LODGE NOW GREAT VALUE

KFPL has revised its fee for staying at Imbu Rano Lodge located at the entrance to the 400m altitude conservation area.

For one person, this represents a 70% reduction, or a 40% reduction for two people.

The new fee, effective from 1 December 2010, is \$300 per person per night. There is also a reduced rate for more than four people. For exclusive access to the whole lodge, the fee remains at \$4,000 per night.

The fee was reduced in consultation with KIBCA after feedback from visitors confirmed that a lower price was more competitive with similar Western Province lodges and guest houses.

The fee for KFPL staff and family remains at \$75 per person per night.



Using a birdwatching spotting scope from the expansive deck at Imbu Rano Lodge. Enjoying the rainforest is now great value.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A GREAT NEW YEAR

KIBCA wishes everybody a joyous and peaceful Christmas period and looks forward to another successful 2011 for Kolombangara Island.

WWF VISIT

In November, KIBCA hosted a visit by the WWF Western Melanesian Program staff and their PNG-based representative, Dr Neil Stronach.

KIBCA introduced WWF to its growing office at Ringgi and led a short walk to the 400m altitude conservation area.



Ferguson Vaghi (3rd from left) hosts WWF staff at KIBCA's Office

OTHER KIBCA ACTIVITIES

KIBCA is building a website to promote Kolombangara Island to tourists. Let KIBCA know if you have any tourist-related business you would like us to promote.

Check our new website at www.kolombangara.org

CURRENT EVENTS 2010

December

- 7-10 Meeting of Solomon Island community conservation projects in Honiara
- 15-16 Training workshop on landholder rights and the legal process for logging at Ghatere, Poporo and Hambere villages
- 22 KIBCA AGM at Nghusu, Nth Kolombangara

January

2011 scholarships open.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the KIBCA Office, on the left half way up the main hill at Ringgi and say hello to the KIBCA staff:

- **Ferguson Vaghi**, KIBCA Coordinator, on 740 1198 or coordinator@kibca.org
- **Andrew Cox**, KIBCA Technical Officer, on 751 4395 or andrew@kibca.org

ABOUT KIBCA

Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Association is a local member-based organization formed in 2008 to represent Indigenous Kolombangarans and their interests in the conservation of land and marine areas of Kolombangara Island.

KIBCA identifies ways to generate social and employment benefits from conservation activities on the island.