

KIBCA NEWS IS BACK IN CIRCULATION

After an extended break the KIBCA NEWS is back in circulation. The last edition of the NEWS was in July 2011. There have been a few changes at KIBCA since then with some new faces now sitting in the Office.

Adrian Ghele has joined KIBCA as its Administration Officer taking up his position in January 2012. Adrian is from Vavanga on Kolombangara. After completing Business Studies in Honiara he has worked in Government and various private companies, the most recent being KFPL. Adrian has previously been on the executive of KIBCA and held the position of Secretary.

Also joining KIBCA is AVI Volunteer Sean Court. Sean joined KIBCA in April as a Technical Advisor to assist with the management of the 400m Conservation Area. At home in Australia, Sean works as a Ranger for the New South Wales, National Parks and Wildlife Service. He will be with KIBCA till September 2013.

In addition to Adrian and Sean two Trainee Rangers, Wayne Tefenoli and Dennis Polly were appointed in June (see full story on the Ranger positions page 3).



New KIBCA staff. Wayne Tefenoli, Sean Court and Adrian Ghele

CONSERVATION SUPPORTING EDUCATION

In May KIBCA commenced delivery of funds from its 2012 Educational Scholarship Program. This year 120 individual Scholarships worth \$90,000 will be granted to assist students from the Island.

The scholarship program is a direct benefit from the establishment of the Kolombangara Island conservation area. The 20,000 hectare conservation area, the largest in the Solomon Islands, has attracted international and national support for the scholarship scheme.

This year scholarships were awarded to students from Kolombangara Island enrolled in Forms Four through to Seven. The 120 students are spread over 22 schools located in the Western Province, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Makira.

KIBCA presented a cheque to Mr. Michael Tanento, Headmaster of the Ringgi Community High School, last week. The cheque is for scholarships awarded to 15 students attending the school. Mr. Tanento, said the school was very appreciative of the support each scholarship provides his students.

“On behalf of the school, the students and their families I would like to say thank you to KIBCA. This will help the students greatly with their education”, said Mr. Tanento.

Ferguson Vaghi, KIBCA coordinator, said the KIBCA Scholarship scheme is becoming a popular and important component of KIBCA’s conservation program.

“It is very important to support the education of our young people here on Kolombangara. These young students will be the leaders of tomorrow”, said Mr. Vaghi.

Financial support for the scholarship program has been provided from the Kolombangara Forest Products Limited, American Museum of Natural History, through the Solomon Island Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP) and individual donors from Australia.

KIBCA will continue to promote the strong link between education and conservation with another round of scholarships to be made available in 2013. Families from Kolombangara Island with students attending school can contact the KIBCA office in Ringgi to receive more information on the Educational Scholarship Program.



Adrian Ghele, Administration Officer KIBCA, presents an Educational Scholarship cheque to Mr. Michael Tanento, Headmaster Ringgi Community High School.

KIBCA'S HIGH COURT CHALLENGE OVER LOGGING

On Monday 25 June KIBCA returns to the High Court in Honiara to continue its case challenging the legitimacy of proposed logging operations on Kolombangara. The logging approvals were granted in 2010 over a large area extending from Ghatere to Hapi and include forests within the protected 400m conservation area.

KIBCA is challenging the validity of the approvals granted to Success Logging Company. Two decisions are being challenged. One is a decision of the Director of Environment and Conservation to grant a Development Consent to permit logging. The other is a decision of the Commissioner of Forestry Resources to allow logging on land over 400m altitude within the Kolombangara Island conservation area. KIBCA is claiming that the correct consultative, planning and assessment procedures were not followed by Success or the Government Offices.

KIBCA has also raised in the claim the issue of bias in the decision making process. The Minister for Forestry at the time the logging approvals were granted was Mr. Bodo Dettke, a Director of Success Logging Company.

KIBCA has taken the High Court action to ensure that Government Departments as well as logging companies follow the correct procedures and to ensure that the 400m Conservation Area is protected.

Monday's hearing is an application by KIBCA to stop any logging from happening on the land in question until the main case is heard later this year.

SCIENTISTS CONDUCT KOLOMBANGARA RESEARCH

A number of scientists have visited Kolombangara Conservation Area during June to conduct research on a range of topics including birds, freshwater fish and climate change.

Brian Weeks who is conducting his PhD at Columbia University in the USA has spent a month on the mountains researching Kolombangara's birds. Myknee Sirikolo from Solomon Island Forestry Commission paid a quick visit in early June and collected orchid samples to take back to the National Herbarium in Honiara.

Also paying a visit in June was David Boseto of Gizo. David is presently undertaking his PhD on freshwater fish at Texas A & M University Corpus Christi, USA. His research of species in the Villa River has revealed a fish previously unknown to science. With many of the rivers on Kolombangara yet to be surveyed the probability of further species to be discovered is high.

As part of their visit in June, American Museum of Natural History staff worked with local Rangers installing climate monitors between Imbu Rano and Mt Veve. Four monitors were put in place at 400m altitude intervals and will measure and record data every 15 minutes on temperature and relative humidity.

These measurements will help researchers gain a better understanding of the islands climate and how it influences habitat and species composition at different altitude.

There is evidence that deforestation and structural change in forests at low elevations is affecting the microclimates found on the Solomon's mountainous islands. This in turn is impacting the high elevation cloud forests and the rich endemic fauna and flora they support.

The information gathered will provide important baseline data for future climate change studies. In turn enabling a better understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of human activity on climate at a local, regional and global level.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION VISITS KI

In early June Chris Holtz from the MacArthur Foundation visited Kolombangara. The Foundation, through its partnership with the American Museum of Natural History and SICCP is the largest donor to KIBCA. Chris was accompanied by Eleanor Sterling, Director of the Center of Biodiversity and Conservation at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and Chris Filardi, the Center's Director of Pacific Programs.

The group commenced their stay on Kolombangara with a visit to Hunda where they were warmly welcomed by the local community. This was followed by two nights at Imbu Rano Lodge that included a short trek to Potu Kolo. Birds, snakes, frogs and the conservation areas remarkable natural and cultural heritage were the focus of the conversations. A traditional kastom feast was held at Imbu Rano to mark the occasion with a spirited performance provided by the Paratovogo Village bamboo band.

The visit provided the MacArthur Foundation and AMNH the opportunity to meet and speak with the community, KIBCA members and staff about the island and management of the conservation area.



Myknee Sirikolo (SI Forestry Commission), Chris Holtz (MacArthur Foundation) and Chris Filardi (AMNH) discuss evening birds calls from the deck of Imbu Rano Lodge

RINGGI HIGH SCHOOL VISIT

Students from Form 1 at Ringgi Community High School recently paid a visit to the KIBCA office where Ferguson Vaghi presented a talk on the role of KIBCA and the importance of conservation. Following their visit to the office the students headed to Imbu Rano Lodge and embarked on a walk through the forest and to the Villa River. For many of the students this was their first time to Imbu Rano and the conservation area.



Form 1 students from Ringgi Community High School at the KIBCA office.



*..and at a lookout in the conservation area. The students enjoyed the walk, the view and the sight of a pair of Solomon Eagles (*Haliaeetus sanfordi*) soaring above the Villa River.*

TRAINEE RANGERS APPOINTED BY KIBCA

KIBCA has appointed two new staff as Trainee Rangers. Joining the KIBCA team are Wayne Tefenoli from Ghartere and Denis Polly of Hambere. A third Trainee Ranger will be appointed in the coming weeks. The Rangers will be based in their local communities and will assist KIBCA with a range of programs to improve the collection of natural and cultural information and the management of the 400m Conservation Area.

Over the next 12 months the Rangers will receive on the job training to develop their skills and experience. This will include training in computer, GPS and map reading; field research, tourism planning, interpretation of natural and cultural heritage, visitor guiding as well as walking track construction and maintenance.

PROTECTED AREAS ACT WORKSHOP

On Sunday 27 May KIBCA hosted a workshop on the National Governments Protected Area Act and Protected Areas Regulations. The one-day workshop was held at Imbu Rano Lodge.

The Government's Protected Areas Act 2010 and recently passed Protected Areas Regulations 2012 provide communities with legal measures to protect their cultural sites, land and marine areas, and ensure sustainable land use practices.

Attending the one-day workshop were representatives of KIBCA, the World Wildlife Fund, Natural Resource Development Foundation, Ghizo Environment Livelihood Conservation Association, Tetepare Descendants Association, American Museum of Natural History and Kolombangara Forest Products Limited.

Mr Adam Beeson from the Land Advocacy and Legal Support Unit (LALSU) of the Public Solicitors Office lead the discussion. LALSU provides legal information and advice to communities on what the Act and Regulations are, how they can be used, and how the application works.

Mr. Ferguson Vaghi, KIBCA Coordinator, said the workshop had been very successful in explaining the purpose of the Government's Act and Regulations.

"KIBCA is carefully looking at how the Act and Regulations can help conservation and promote sustainable land use that has benefits for all of the community", said Mr. Vaghi.

"We believe the Government in passing this Legislation has laid an important foundation for the future protection of the Solomon Islands' rich biodiversity and culture. This can provide long lasting benefits for our people".

Further information on the Protected Areas Act & Regulations contact LALSU on 60682 or lalsu@pso.gov.sb



Clockwise from left. Donald Saepio (KIBCA), Allan Bero (TDA), Ferguson Vaghi (KIBCA), Mayson Nesa (KFPL), Salome Topo (WWF), Adam Beeson (LALSU), Nuatali Venny (GELCA), Marlon Kuve (NRDF), Chris Filardi (AMNH)

KIBCA ATTENDS FIJI TOURISM EXCHANGE

In May, KIBCA coordinator Ferguson Vaghi, visited Fiji to attend The Bula Fiji Tourism Exchange. Ferguson's visit was supported by the Solomon Island Visitor Board. The purpose of the visit was to investigate opportunities with overseas marketers for tourism to Kolombangara Island. It provided Ferguson with the opportunity to meet with wholesalers and to get a better understanding of how the tourism market works.

The experience and knowledge gained from the trip will be used to assist KIBCA and its members develop and promote sustainable tourism opportunities on Kolombangara Island.

KIBCA NEW SIGN GREETES VISITORS

Visitors to Imbu Rano Lodge and the Kolombangara conservation area are now welcomed in the local Nduke language. Installed in June the new sign greets visitors with a traditional Nduke welcome, 'Nabe Va Kakamo'.



The new sign at the entrance to the Imbu Rano Lodge and the Kolombangara conservation area.

KIBCA EXECUTIVE MEETING

KIBCA will hold an executive meeting at Vavagna on Wednesday 20 June. The meeting will discuss the 2012-13 Budget and a range of other management considerations. Included amongst the discussions will be the issue of a name for the conservation area. A full report on the meeting will be made in the next KIBCA News.

ABOUT KIBCA

Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Association is a local member-based organisation 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. Visitor info go to: www.kolombangara.org

KOLOMBANGARA SNAPS



Kolombangara Island Conservation Area from Ringgi Cove



From the track to Mt Veve, the perfect place to have a rest



Mt Veve Cloud forest

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the KIBCA Office, give us a call, or send an email and say hello:

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