

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR HERITAGE

Samoa National Parks and Reserves

HISTORY

In 1975, a National Parks and Reserves System for Samoa was developed under the United Nations Development Advisory Team whom identified the importance and need for establishing a nation parks and reserves section; that is "to manage government owned land areas that is set aside and declared for preservation in perpetuity for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of Samoa". This is highly stated in the National Parks and Reserves Act 1975.

Management plan for National Parks and Reserves of Samoa have been developed which highlights the strong emphasis of the Ministry Of Natural Resources and Environment on sustainable development and management of the county's environmental resources.

The National Parks and Reserves Section of the Division of Environment and Conservation is one of the core unit area which conserve, protect and manage these environmental resources for the enjoyment and sustainable use by/for the people of Samoa. It is set out to achieve the goals and objectives, engulfed within the Vision and Mission of the Ministry's Corporate Plan.

The National Parks and Reserves is guided under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment functions and responsibilities in implementing the defined outputs and the four broad areas of the Ministry that has been identified as; i) policy development, ii) resource management, iii) program planning and implementation, and iv) organisational support.

Legislation Mandating the National Parks and Reserves

- Stevenson Memorial Reserve and Mount Vaea Reserve Ordinance 1958
- National Parks and Reserves Act 1974
- Lands and Environment Act 1989

- What is a National Park?

A relatively large, outstanding natural area managed to protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for this and future generations, and to provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational and tourism opportunities.

- What is a Reserve?

An outstanding natural area which is dedicated for long term conservation.

The First Arbor Day Commemoration took place at Vailima Botanical Garden that was established in 1978

List of National Parks and Reserves in Samoa

Area	Location	Establishment Date
NATIONAL PARK		
O le Pupu Pue National Park	Togitogiga.	1978
Lake Lanotoo National Park	Afiamalu	2000
Mauga o Salafai National Park	Vaiaata	2004
NATURE RESERVE		
Aoole malo Reserve	Vailele	2001
Taumeasina Reserve	Taumeasina	2000
Magiagi Reserve	Magiagi	1999
Mataututai Reserve	Matautu-tai	2002
Vaimoso Reserve	Vaimoso	1999
Vaigaga Reserve	Vaigaga	2000
Vaitele East and West Reserves	Vaitele	2000
Mt Vaea Scenic Reserve	Vailima	1958
RLS Historic Reserve	Vailima	1958
Saleleoga Reserve	Savaii	2003
Malaevaalele Reserve	Satapuuala	2006
MARINE RESERVE		
Palolo Deep Marine Reserve	Matautu-tai	1979
RECREATIONAL RESERVE		
Togitogiga Recreational Reserve	Togitogiga	1978
Elelelefou Recreation Reserve	Elelelefou	2000
BOTANICAL GARDEN		
Samoa National Botanical Garden	Vailima	1978
Fuluasou Botanical Garden	Fuluasou	1999

HOW DID SAMOA CATEGORISE THESE AREAS?

According to the principal current legislation, 1974 National Parks and Reserves Act, section 4 enables the Head of State, acting on the advice of the Cabinet, to declare any public land to be a national park, provided it is not set aside for any other public purpose and is not less than 607.ha (1,500 acres), except in the case of an island.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) spelled out the categories in their 2003 Update List of Definitions of a Nationally Designated Protected Area.

Categories:

Category 1a: Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science

Definition: Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, ecological or physical features and /or species, available primarily or scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Category 1b: Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection.

Definition: Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Category 11: National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation.

Definition: Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystem for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, education, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.



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SANDMINING IN SAMOA

SAND RESOURCES

Sand as a Natural Resource:

Sand by definition "is a loose, incoherent mass of mineral materials and it is the product of the chemical and mechanical breakdown of rocks and corals under the influence of weathering and abrasion".

Sand is a mineral resource produced by nature through marine and littoral processes. While nature plays a major role in the supply (and erosion) of sand, human exploitation of the resource due to high demands has immensely depleted sand and its consequent sources of supply.

As a finite resource, sustainability of sand supply relies heavily on sustainable management and careful consideration on its limited supply.

Sand's Significance as a Mineral Resources:

Sand as an important constituent of most soils and is extremely abundant as a surface deposit along the courses of rivers and streams, on the shores of lakes and sea, and arid regions.

Sand has wide range uses. As a product of nature, it is extremely useful for environmental protection of the coastal environment and foreshores as well as inland nearby rivers and lakes.

It is a basic constituent of materials, which produces a buffer system against coastal high tides, storm surges and sea-level rise as well as against erosion of riverbanks.

Sand's Significance as a commodity:

As a commodity, sand is the basic ingredient that can either be used rawly or being the main ingredient for products such as cement, bricks, sandpaper, plasters and for water filtering purposes. It comes as two types: black and white. Black sand is accorded better quality because of its compact nature whereas white sand is more loose, coarse and salty yet still very marketable.

Its significance as a commodity lies within the level of demand by the construction industry, including commercial, individuals, communal, and infrastructure projects. Its commercial value has made it highly marketable in the economic sense and this has led inevitably to discreet levels of mining resulting to the consequent depletion of sand and unmanageable state of the surrounding environment.

SANDMINING

Sandmining is the removal of sand from its natural place of deposition and/or accumulation. It is an inevitable activity because of its variety of uses being that it is an essential ingredient for building materials required for construction and development purposes.

Sandmining has been on the increase lately due to high demands from individuals, communal, development projects and the construction industry. These demands have encouraged indiscreet mining, resulting in coastal erosions, changes in shoreline structures and disruption to marine life and coastal environment.

SANDMINING AS A HUMAN-INDUCED ACTIVITY

Sandmining is the removal of sand from its natural place of deposition and/or accumulation. Sandmining is an inevitable activity because of its variety of uses being that it is an essential ingredient for building materials required for construction and development purposes.

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ADVERSE EFFECTS OF UNSUSTAINABLE SANDMINING

Unsustainable sandmining is the removal of sand without due regard for the surrounding environment of the proposed area for mining and the absence of any sustainable measures (mitigation or small quantity). Some of the disturbing impacts on the environment of unsustainable mining are:

- Limiting the ability of sand sources through natural marine processes to replenish the sand.
- Alteration of our coastline/shoreline structures
- Erosion of costal lands resulting to loss of land into the sea
- Erosion of stream and riverbanks up/downstream and the consequent reduction in water quality for catchment's areas and coastal seas
- High turbidity levels resulting to contamination of quality of sea water and impacting severely on coastal fishery and community livelihoods

LEGISLATIONS AND REGULATIONS

Stated below are the two main legislations that mandate the role of the Ministry for Sandmining activities in Samoa.

1. The Constitution of the Independent Sate of Samoa under the Article 4 defines public land as: "all land lying below the line of high-water mark". And "high-water mark" means "the line of median high tide between the spring and neap tides".
2. The Lands, Survey and Environment Act 1989, states that without the prior consent of the Minister in writing, "no person shall remove any silt, sand, gravel, cobble, boulders or coral from the foreshore" or coastal waters, or "carry out any excavation, dredging, clearing, paving grading, or ploughing or other activities within the foreshore and coastal waters" of same. Also in the Act, it mentioned penalties to be imposed should such illegal actions be confirmed. The offender will pay a penalty of no less then \$5,000-00.

For the legislation to be effective the Ministry formulated a Sandmining Policy to regulate the mining of sand in Samoa. The purpose of the policy is:

- To promote the sustainable mining of sand for the protection of the coastal and foreshore environment and at the same time ensuring the availability of sand for development purposes; and
- To promote and strengthen the partnership between the government and the private sector.

Illegal Mining of Sand and Penalty

Illegal sandmining is happening everywhere especially in the countryside of Upolu and Savaii. This type of practice is greatly discouraged as the offender if caught in the act is subject to a fine penalty of no less than \$5,000-00 not been solicited without approval from the MNREM with the issuing of sand permit.

**For more information
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