

OUR ENVIRONMENT OUR HERITAGE



SUSTAINABLE LIVING :

- Vaiusu Bay Style -



Some of the coastal villages within Faleata District, surrounding Vaiusu Bay, have been selected for some real improvements in their lifestyle. Vaiusu Bay, as you all remember, had once been the local household rubbish dumping site, and even acting as a sand-dredging site for many years

Can anyone remember taking all their rubbish and throwing it into the mangroves, into the Vaiusu Bay?

In 1996, Government relocated the dumpsite to Tafaigata. Has anyone been to **Tafaigata Dumpsite**

lately? It is truly amazing how so much rubbish can be carefully processed and buried. No more burning of these wastes is allowed at this site. Why? That's right. It is so poisonous to our health, and even our wildlife. So do we still see villagers, and sometimes even schools, burning all their rubbish? It is time for all of us to stop unnecessary burning of rubbish, especially plastics (that can cause cancer) and leaves and grasses (that can be better used as good compost for the nearby plants). Getting the picture?

In February 2008, Government also put a stop to the sand dredging in the Bay. We now all realize that all of our coastal villages are relying on their marine-life as a source of food. We cannot afford to keep reducing the production of marine-life and seafood. Or can we? Remember, as climate change impacts our shores even more, food security becomes a more serious issue. We all need to prepare for all the damage that global warming will cause.

As an aside, does anyone know the connection between air pollution and global warming? Of course we do, so why don't our pulenuu ban all fires in our villages, except those for cooking? Come on now, go and see your pulenuu today and ask kindly for his help. Suggest a \$10 fine for each family court polluting our air, causing cancer, and causing more global warming.

Please write in and tell us what your pulenuu said....

Attempts have also been made to protect the remaining mangroves in Vaiusu Bay, these mangroves being so important for our inshore fisheries, as a source of medicinal plants, even helping to protect our coastline from storm damages.

The question now is: "Can Vaiusu Bay be fully restored to its original status?"

Maybe one day soon, Vaiusu Bay will become a popular ecotourism destination, maybe equipped with a beautiful mangrove walkway where our children can wonder safely to view some pristine mangrove ecosystems, with fish and crabs breeding beneath the walkway, seabirds resting and feeding in the shallows, and even plant-out a few new mangrove seedlings themselves.



Imagine if every school child in Apia planted one new mangrove tree per year in Vaiusu Bay? Wouldn't it start to look beautiful within say 10 years time? And if every school child picked-up a paelo/bucket of tins and rubbish from around the shores of Vaiusu Bay, then imagine what Vaiusu Bay would soon look like? Mind you, we all need to stop throwing our household rubbish into all the streams and drains flowing into Vaiusu Bay. Do you see your neighbours discarding of their rubbish this way? Does the rubbish truck collect rubbish in front of your house twice a week? Then, for the sake of all the fish and crabs in Vaiusu Bay, let's get all our household rubbish onto those trucks and send all those trucks out to? Where? That's right. Tafaigata Dumpsite.

Residents of Vaiusu...

Now, the residents of Vaiusu Bay have expressed all these concerns at recent consultations with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), wanting the old dumpsite restored, wanting more mangroves planted out where they once grew, wanting to also prevent some serious flooding from further reducing their living standards. Mind you, these same residents in Vaiusu Bay were also happy to hear that the sand dredging has finally stopped, the dumpsite is about to be finally restored, and that somehow Government is going to try and help stop some of the damage being caused by flooding in these low-lying areas.

UNDP have designed a Programme of Works for Protected Areas (PoWPA) and this funding has been offered to these coastal villages to now try and protect this once beautiful mangrove and coastal ecosystem, restoring it to the best possible level, with the best possible management of these coastal natural resources.

But the question now is: "Do we have the management skills within Samoa, within Vaiusu Bay, to successfully restore these mangroves and coastal ecosystems?"

The answer is : Even if we don't, we are all going to get trained on how best to protect not only our mangroves, fish and crabs, but also all the wildlife in Samoa.

The MNRE is now preparing a new '**Key Biodiversity Area Booklet**' with all the best wildlife conservation sites in Samoa being recorded within this booklet. And this booklet will contain all the latest wildlife management advices on how best to manage Samoa's unique and precious wildlife, both marine and terrestrial.

Two other such MPAs have been operating in Aleipata and Safata Districts for the past 10 years or more. The lessons learnt and the results from these two MPAs will be applied to the new MPA in Vaiusu Bay.

But what does this all mean to you and I?

Well, it simply means that we may soon be learning how to live a more sustainable lifestyle with good food, good schooling, good ecosystems and good management of all our wildlife, including human beings.

After all, UNDP want us all to achieve our Millennium Development Goals, our MDGs, by 2015.

So in rehabilitating Vaiusu Bay, it means that all of us can help:

- by keeping our air clean,
- sending ALL our rubbish to Tafaigata,
- by clearing all the rubbish away from our drains and rivers that feed into Vaiusu Bay,
- and by learning with us over the next few weeks how we can all Save Samoa's Siosiomaga.



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CHILDREN'S CORNER



Children aged 9-15 are invited to answer the following corner. The name of 3 students with top scores at the end of every month will be posted under the "Children's Corner" for special prizes. "2008 Young Environmentalist Star Awards" will be given to 10 students with top total scores at the end of the year.

ADD IN VOWELS - TO MAKE OUT THE WORD(S)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge and thank the following companies for sponsoring our children's corner prizes

- STRICKLAND BROS
- DIGICEL 
The Bigger, Better Network.
- McDONALD'S RESTAURANT
- BUSINESS SYSTEM

TOP PLANNING AWARD WON

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Government of Samoa and the Beca International Consultants Ltd (BICL) have been awarded the NZ Planning Institute (NZPI) "Nancy Northcroft Award". This is the premier award for excellence in planning practice and recognises outstanding creativity and innovation. The late Nancy Northcroft was a pioneer of planning in NZ and the award recognises her contributions over more than 40 years practise.

Graeme Roberts collected the award on behalf of BICL and MNRE at the NZPI Conference held in Greymouth on 4 April 2008. The award citation from NZPI congratulates the Ministry and Beca for having the foresight and tenacity to develop the CIM plans, including the extensive public consultation undertaken.

These plans contain all the meritorious ingredients for the quadruple bottom-line approach to management of the valuable coastal environment, its infrastructure, and communities. They will provide an enormously valuable tool in the basket of knowledge for land use planning in Samoa.

BACKGROUND:

The project involved Beca International Consultants Ltd (Beca) and the Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI), Ministry of Women, Social and Community Development (MWCSO) of the Government of Samoa developing a national level policy for the management of coastal infrastructure and local implementation plans - (known as Coastal Infrastructure

Management Plans - CIM Plans) for all of Samoa's coastline, approximately 303km.

The Strategy and CIM Plans provide actions that contribute to the improvement of the resilience of local communities to the effects of cyclones, coastal erosion, inundation, flooding and landslips. The plans are based on state of the coastal environment reporting for both major islands of Samoa. This was a World Bank initiative, in which the Government of Samoa commissioned Beca International Consultants (Beca) to lead this work.

The CIM Plans provide a description of the existing environment; identify and assess the resilience of existing infrastructure (roads, electricity, power, water supply, churches, schools, airports, hospitals etc) against coastal hazards and provide potential solutions and ways to reduce susceptibility to coastal hazards (cyclones, flooding, erosion etc). Actions are assigned to various government departments and local villages to implement.

The CIM Plans were formally signed by Village representatives, and the MNRE on behalf of the Government. This represents a partnership between the key participants to implement the plan's provisions and signifies an acknowledgement by each party of the roles and responsibilities of the other.



Community consultation

Produced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment