



The BIATF meeting was done with Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as Chair in the island of Boracay



# BIATF GIVES NOD TO REOPEN BORACAY ISLAND

The Boracay Inter-agency Task Force chaired by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, along with Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Eduardo M. Año in coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs) of Aklan, and other Task Force members during their meeting last June 11, gave a green light to reopen Boracay Island for the Western Visayas tourists starting June 16, 2020.

The BIATF's approval brings fresh hope to Aklan province that made the recommendation to slowly restart economic activities in the island.

Cimatu announced the same during the virtual press conference with members of the media, even citing the island's readiness to accept local travellers.

Since the pandemic is still ongoing, the BIATF through the DENR-EMB shall continue to closely monitor Boracay Island's water quality. As per EMB record, the island has reached an impressive

safe level of water quality suitable for swimming and other recreational activities.

With the resumption of tourism activities, both Secretary Año and Secretary Puyat said restrictions, such as curfew may still be imposed within the discretion of the LGU. Other restrictions such as denying entry to individuals



After the meeting, Secretary Cimatu led the BIATF to conduct an ocular inspection on the progress of the rehabilitation in the island.

below 21 years old and above 60 years old would be implemented in compliance with the existing Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) guidelines.

Activities involving close physical contact will also be prohibited, although the task force still needs to decide what specific activities to allow and to prohibit.

Under said guidelines, accommodation establishments are required to impose stringent measures for physical distancing. All hotels in Boracay had been accredited by the DOT following its previous six-month closure but Romulo-Puyat said they would have to submit a letter of intent to operate for the opening.

The world class tourist destination was shut down for six months in 2018 ordered by the President as he tagged the island a "cesspool" and decreed for its rehabilitation. Another "closure" however was brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic which has greatly taken a toll on the island's tourism activities.



# Women's Month 2020 celebrates women's role as catalyst for change



Left: Atty. Pio Dargantes, Ombudsman Director in Region 6 as resource speaker during the GAD Forum. Right: Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. with the DENR 6 employees had a photo op showing the hand gesture to stop violence against women and children.

DENR-adopted the theme: Women Can Make Change in Climate and Disaster Resiliency for its 2020 National Women's Month Celebration, aimed at empowering females to attain their full potentials in becoming effective contributors for the country's sustainable development.

The DENR Region 6 has time and again, recognized women as leaders, caretakers and educators in protecting and conserving the environment and natural resources. In highlighting their effective roles, a Gender and Development (GAD) Forum was conducted at the regional Activity Center.

Speakers during the forum were: Estela F. Paredes, president and executive director of *Expertpanel Consultancy, Inc.*, who tackled the basic gender concepts and salient features of *Republic Act No. 9710* or the *Magna Carta of*

*Women* which empower ladies of their rights. Paredes explained between sex and gender as the terms were frequently mistakenly identified. While sex is an identification of the biological differences in a human body based on their reproductive function, gender is the psychological and sociocultural characteristics whether feminine or masculine.

Gender biases victimized both men and women as they suffer inequality, but mostly women were known to be often mistreated. The *Magna Carta of Women* seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors. Violators of this Act can get help from the Barangay VAW Desk or the PNP Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD).

Atty. Pio R. Dargantes, Director of Ombudsman in Region 6 discussed the topics *Gender Sensitivity* and *Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act* (R.A. 9262). Atty. Dargantes thoroughly discussed gender sensitivity in recognizing women and their roles in nation building and ensuring equality of women and men.

In battling the challenges faced by the DENR to mitigate the effects of climate change and to protect and conserve the environment and natural resources, there are women who made valuable contributions to the Department namely: Loren Legarda and Josephine Ramirez-Sato. Both Legarda and Ramirez-Sato are among female leaders who spoke up and acted with integrity as they pursue their environmental advocacy.

## World Wetlands Day 2020



World Wetlands Day 2020 adopted the theme: "Wetlands and Biodiversity." The regional office in collaboration with PENRO Negros Occidental conducted activities for the day. One of those was the bird watching with the eager students from Eusebio R. Quitco Elementary School. The kids enjoyed watching migratory birds in Brgy. Tibsoc, San Enrique, Negros Occidental which is part of the Ramsar site.



# MALANDOG RIVER: ANTIQUE'S PRIDE TOWARDS CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DEV'T

The transformation of Malandog River as an ecotourism destination in the province of Antique is now taking shape, with a beautiful esplanade adorned with plant boxes, benches and lights installed in the area.

What was once a landscape of unpaved road and the not-so-clean river that have seen the ravages of time and deterioration is now being given a revival. As Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu bats for clean rivers throughout the country, Malandog River stood out unique with its historicity.

Once called by Secretary Cimatu as an “ancient port,” Malandog River in Hamtic, Antique is where the historic landing of the ten Bornean

datus and the famed “barter of Panay” took place. It is where the first Malay settlement was established thus, Malandog River became the cradle of civilization in Panay Island.

With its unique history and culture, Secretary Cimatu believed it is worth to revive the Malandog River and to preserve its historical worth for the next generation of Antiqueños to enjoy and take pride in. Thus, he began to pursue its rehabilitation, addressing first the water pollution and proper solid waste management. He was given the active support of the women leaders in the province of Antique – that of Governor Rhodora J. Cardiao and Congresswoman Loren B. Legarda.

Aside from the physical improvements

around Malandog River, the river’s desiltation is underway by July to improve the water quality, remove blockage to the water’s natural flow and to eventually revive back the fishing livelihood for the community. Coastal clean ups were also done to secure the cleanness of the river. The hired Bantay Suba members by Hamtic LGU are deployed in strategic points to ensure people’s compliance to proper solid waste management.

The improvements being implemented under the Malandog River Rehabilitation and Development Program (MaRiReDeP) is being closely monitored by DENR 6 regional executive director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. and Antique PENR Officer Andres T. Untal.







## DENR 6 pays tribute to its employees thru *Isang Linggong Handog sa Kawaning Naglilingkod*

**B**olstering employees' work satisfaction is the emerging trends in Human Resource Management (HRM) and is now considered a vital aspect of HRM since it is closely tied to the performance of an individual in an organization.

In the past, work and happiness weren't strongly associated with each other. Work was a place where employees are meant to come in, get the job done and clock out. Happiness was for their free time.

In advocating for an efficient human resource

team, the DENR 6 ensures good working condition such as safe, clean and healthy environment which helps to bring out the best in an employee. The Office also fosters a friendly atmosphere which provides the personnel job satisfaction as well.

Thus, the DENR 6 thru its Administrative Division led the conduct of the five-day (February 17–21, 2020) event dubbed as Isang Linggong Handog sa Kawaning Naglilingkod (Building on Employee Engagement to Kickstart the Year). The

activities are team building in nature and were aimed to bring the employees together and encourage collaboration and teamwork.

Each day has a specific theme corresponding to the activities conducted, which was a thing anticipated by the eager employees to join during the 5-day duration of the event. RED Francisco E. Milla, Jr. lauded this effort and positively commended all employees and offices involve for the successful conduct of the event.

### SCHEDULE

#### DAY 1 AM SESSION (February 17, 2020)

*Malusog na Pangangatawan para sa Kawaning Marangal*

Activity: **2019 nCOV Lecture**

Speaker: Dr. Marie Jocelyn J. Te, Department of Health (DOH)  
Dr. Te discussed updates on 2019 nCOV, now called COVID 19 which is now a global health issue and things Filipinos need to be aware of

#### DAY 1 PM SESSION

Activity: **Lecture on Health and Wellness and Vegetarian Cooking Demo**

Speaker: Eden A. Magcan, a 50-year old medical missionary and a plant-based vegetarian. She taught the DENR personnel how to prepare diet meals

#### DAY 2 SESSION

*Kawaning Maganda, Dulot ay Sigla*

Activities: **Short Meditation and Prayer**

Lecture on Facial Treats conducted by Beauty Essentials  
Lecture on Massage Therapy by San Pedro Calungsod  
Alternative Healing Center San Jose Placer  
Massage Time and Facial Treats for Everyone  
Zumba, Hataw Na!

#### DAY 3 SESSION

*Handog Serbisyo, Pag-Asikaso sa Benepisyo*

PhilHealth Updates GSIS Updates  
HDMF Updates PAG-IBIG Loyalty Card Plus Enrollment

#### DAY 4 SESSION

*Kawaning Masaya, Tagumpay ang Dala*

Yoga Laughter with Dr. Daisy C. Daquilanea  
Ballroom Dancing (Twist, Boogie, Swing, Cha-cha, Salsa and Tango) Foodfest cum Family Day

#### DAY 5 SESSION

*Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko*

Medical Mission  
Lecture on Cervical Cancer And Eye Care  
Culmination Program with Labugay Boyz





# ENVIRONMENT MONTH GOES VIRTUAL



With restrictions on people's movement and mass gathering due to COVID 19 pandemic, meetings and events that once required physical presence has turned to "virtual" attendance via the digital platform.

In compliance to health and safety protocols, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 6 conducted the Environment Month 2020 with a blend of limited physical presence and more of a virtual attendance, and was still able to successfully carry out its activities for the month.

The adopted theme for Environment Month 2020 is "Protect Nature, Sustain Our Future" with #HealNature4OurFuture. Scheduled activities for the month adapted to the new trend of virtual activities using the Zoom meeting online platform.

"This virus is not bad luck. It is an entirely predictable result of human destruction of our nature. This COVID-19 which was transmitted from animals to humans is a direct warning that nature can take a move, which is why we need to walk the talk to protect the environment. I encourage everyone to be aware and act for the protection of the environment," said regional executive director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. in his

message via Zoom during the *Pasidungog* on June 29, 2020.

On June 10, the regional office celebrated the DENR's 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary and Family Day 2020. It kicked off the celebration with a caravan participated in by the DENR's Bureaus, PENRO Iloilo, regional based vehicles and partner agencies around the city's vicinities. A mass at the DENR Courtyard was held and was aired over DENR's Western Visayas Facebook live.

After the mass, the DENR 6 opened its *Handwashing Area* near the Department's gate as part of the COVID 19 efforts of the region. Other activities conducted for the month are as follows:

Virtual Environmental Quiz on June 19 among DENR 6 employees; Technology Demonstration of Bamboo Propagation with the presence of selected city government personnel and People's Organizations on June 24; Virtual Poster Making Contest on June 25; Virtual Essay Writing Contest on June 26; Blended physical presence and virtual DENR *Pasidungog* 2020 on June 29 and Culmination Activity named *Halad ni Mother Earth sa mga Frontliners*, on June 30. The culmination activity recognized all DENR 6 frontliners and awarded the winners of various competitions,

including the *Matahum*, *Matinlo Ka* DENR or the search for the Best Office from the regional office, PENRO and CENRO.

The Arbor Day 2020 celebration on June 25 was conducted simultaneously in three different areas, with bamboo planting at Calajunan Sanitary Landfill in Mandurriao District; Ohong Area, Floodway in Brgy. Buhang, Jaro; and at the Katunggan Park in the municipality of Leganes. More than 3,000 bamboo seedlings were planted by the volunteers in one day.

"These awards given to you will not only mean that you are good in the service but a very good one. You (DENR staff) had proven the true meaning of public service. I may not be physically there but my heartfelt thanks to you and to your hard work are always there," said RED Milla.

A special citation was also given to RED Milla for being an active leader and as a role model for public service.

Recognizing the effort of the personnel and giving them awards are in accord with the instruction of DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to boost the trust and confidence of each employee to do better in their work and in the name of the public service.



# BIATF endorses BIDA for a sustainable Boracay Island

The BIATF endorses the creation of a Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) and already has a draft bill before the Congress. The BIDA will promote growth for sustainable development, to maintain ecological balance, to protect and enhance the quality of the environment in the Island.

The BIATF was created on May 8, 2018 under Executive Order (EO) No. 53 with the DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as chairperson, DILG Secretary Eduardo Año and DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat as co-chairs.

Under Executive Order No. 115, the Philippine President extends the BIATF until May 2021 to allow the completion of the critical projects



adopted from the Boracay Action Plan (BAP) based on its four thematic areas, namely: enforcement of laws and regulations, pollution control and prevention, rehabilitation and recovery of the ecosystem, and sustainability of island activities.

The BIDA will operate, administer short and long-term plans, and manage the rehabilitation and development of Boracay Island as well as regulate the issuance of permits, order of closure or suspension, cessation of operations and any concern that are detrimental to Boracay Island and will also help ensure that the island will continue to exist with a functioning ecosystem under a workable plan for sustainable development.

## ARD Vego retires, former Iloilo PENR Officer Lorilla assumes post

After forty one years and eleven months in public service, Assistant Regional Director Jesse L. Vego retired from public service last February 29, 2020. Prior to his retirement, Vego was the Assistant Regional Director for Management Services of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 6.

Forester Vego had served in various capacities during his time with the Department, namely: as chief of the then Forest Resources Development Division (FRDD) under the Forestry Management Services (FMS) to Provincial ENR Officer of Antique, Negros Occidental, and Guimaras. He was formerly the ARD for Technical Services and was later assigned as the ARD for Management Services. He began his career with the DENR, formerly known as the Bureau of Forest

Development (BFD), in March 1, 1978.

Vego was awarded as an outstanding alumnus in public service in 2017 (?) of the University of the Philippines Los Baños where he graduated from his Bachelor of Science in Forestry.

On September 3, 2019, ARD Vego conducted a whole-day lecture on Enhancement Training on Technical Writing and Use of Protocol.

"I celebrate my 62nd birthday through conducting a whole office hour's marathon lecture of what I ought to share with the DENR personnel in what could be my last birthday as a DENR employee," ARD Jesse L. Vego said in a post on his Facebook account.

ARD Vego is tagged as the "great historian" of DENR Region 6, with his keen memories of past events and he loved to engage his audience with trivia. Aside from being the great historian, ARD Vego is also output oriented and always left behind better changes in the office where he served to the

benefit of those who would come after him.

He worked hard to procure vehicles for PENRO Negros Occidental during his stint there, aside from personally overseeing the construction of the office building which improved the working area for the employees. In PENRO Guimaras, he personally set up a rainwater harvesting tool which is still used by the employees there.

"Now, I realized that many recognized what I have done, all in the name of public service, memories to cherish, a "legacy" to behold. The accolades were indeed flattering. Thank you to the people who worked with me," he said.

After ARD Vego retired, Forester Raul L. Lorilla assumed post as the new ARD for Management Services by virtue of Special Order No. 2020-65. A simple turn-over ceremony was conducted last March 11, 2020. Lorilla spent more than nine years as PENR Officer for Iloilo, beginning January 24, 2011.

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# DENR to push for EPEB to protect forests and rangers



DENR 6 Regional Executive Director (RED) Francisco E. Milla, Jr. (right) as he welcomed the participants (middle) from other regions to the workshop in Iloilo City. USec for Field Operations, Enforcement and Muslim Affairs Jim O Sampulna (left) as he reads the message of Secretary Roy A. Cimatu. Workshop participants included REDs from 17 other regions, PENROs, ARDs for Technical Services and Chiefs of Enforcement Division.

**B**amboo plantation establishment under the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) in the province of Negros Occidental has achieved an impressive accomplishment of their targets.

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A total of 3,094 hectares for plantation establishment was accomplished by PENRO Negros Occidental, broken down as follows: 772 ha. (CENRO Bago City), 502 ha. (CENRO Cadiz City), and

1,820 ha. (CENRO Kabankalan City). The province was also able to raise a total of 644,968 bamboo planting stocks, with CENRO accomplishments to wit: 157,488 (CENRO Bago City), 98,728 (CENRO Cadiz City), and 388,752 (CENRO Kabankalan City).

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Edgardo M. Rostata of Negros Occidental ensures that the implementation of Enhanced National Greening Program (NGP) in the said province are always on track.

Rostata himself conducted site visit, inspection and monitoring of the different ENGP areas within the province to have first-hand information on how good or bad the implementation are

done.

Among the areas Rostata visited were Brgys. Sura and Molobolo, Cauayan; Brgy. Manlucaboc, Sipalay City; and Kabankalan City. He also visited and inspected the bamboo propagation and plantation establishment areas in the jurisdiction of CENRO Kabankalan City.

Rostata also graced the inauguration of the Provincial Nursery located at Guintubdan, La Carlota City along with the Chiefs of the Technical and Management Divisions, SVEMS, eNGP, CDS, and Park Superintendents of Mount Kanlaon Natural Park (MKNP) and North Negros Natural Park (NNNP) last February 14, 2020.

## Animals enjoy less pollution



The lockdown in March due to COVID-19 brought good changes to the environment, such as less air pollution and a much serene environment without people and vehicles on the streets. A thing which has brought joy to the many animals. Birds such as the yellow-bellied whistler and Eurasian tree sparrow were frequently seen flying in the sky and were heard chirping and singing from the trees in the community. Endangered sea turtles such as the Hawksbill, Green Sea and Olive ridley were helped and rescued by fishermen amid the ongoing pandemic.



# Aklan celebrates Arbor Day 2020, cum launches ENGP bamboo plantation

**T**he Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Provincial ENR Office (DENR-PENRO) of Aklan celebrated Arbor Day 2020 on June 25, 2020 at Brgy. Monlaque, Ibajay, Aklan.

OIC PENRO Merlene B. Aborka led the activity which also launched the commencement of the bamboo plantation establishment under the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) in the Province of Aklan. This is in support to the thrust

of DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to make Panay Island as the bamboo capital of the Philippines.

“Bamboo contributes a lot in soil and water conservation, climate change mitigation and sustainable livelihood,” said DENR Aklan PENRO Aborka.

The Arbor Day celebration in the province aims to establish three (3) hectares of bamboo plantation. The volunteers during the bamboo planting activity were able to initially plant a to-

tal of 612 propagules of “Botong” (*Gigantochloa levis*). The activity was participated in by PENRO Aklan personnel and members of ENGP’s Peoples Organization.

Proclamation No. 643, signed in 2004 has institutionalized the observance of Arbor Day every 25th of June in the Philippines. The Proclamation mandated the conduct of tree planting activities to promote a healthier ecosystem for the people.



## PENRO Antique launches Coral Triangle Initiative Day virtual painting contest

**T**he Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in the province of Antique launched a virtual Painting Contest in observance of the Coral Triangle Day Initiative 2020 and called on young Antiqueños to bring out their artistic side to capture in their artwork the essence of marine protection in relation to the current pandemic.

Every 9th day of June, the Coral Triangle Initiative Day is celebrated to raise awareness on ocean conservation and protection, especially on the Coral Triangle, the world’s epicenter of marine biodiversity.

The virtual Painting Contest engaged young Antiqueños aging 10-18 years old and to inculcate in them important environmental protection values. The concept of their artwork focused on eco-friendly and healthy ways to fight COVID-19 and how such ways could affect our marine life. This was also in line with the celebration of Environment Month 2020 with the theme: “Protect

Nature Sustain Our Future” #WeHealNature-4OurFuture.

A total of seven participants joined the contest. Evaluation of winners was based on the number of reactions given to entries which were posted in the Facebook page of DENR PENRO Antique, and on the average percentage rated by the board of judges. The following emerged as winners: Glynn Vher P. Ardamos (1st Place); Cyriel Jade Q. Mendelore (2nd Place); and Jerod Loise P. Omambac (3rd Place).

The list of winners was posted on the DENR PENRO Antique FB page and prizes were delivered to them in their respective home addresses, with due observance of the health and safety precautions such as wearing of face masks and social distancing to avoid the spread of COVID 19 virus.

It is indeed a great way to encourage youth involvement towards environmental protection and conservation because they are considered as faces of the future.





# Beautiful waterfalls in PRWFR are potentials for ecotourism

Beautiful waterfalls inside the Panay River Watershed Forest Reserve (PRWFR) in Capiz province are potential ecotourism attractions.

Panay River Watershed Forest Reserve is considered the longest river in Panay Island, with a total length of approximately 152 kilometers or 94 miles long. It has a drainage basin area of 2,181 square kilometers or 842 square miles. It is one of the nine (9) forest reserves in the region by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 599 dated June 28, 1990.

The Presidential Proclamation aims to protect, maintain, or improve the water yield and it also provide the restraining mechanism for inappropriate forest exploitation and disruptive land-use.

Panay River is situated in the municipality of Tapaz, Capiz sprawling across nine barangays namely: Abangay, Acuña, Aglinab, Daan Norte, Daan Sur, Lahug, Nayawan, Roxas, and Tacayan covering a total land area of 2,350 hectares.

Cascading and attractive waterfalls inside



**BINUKOT WATERFALLS**  
Brgy. Lahug  
and Tacapan  
Tapaz, Capiz

**CATAO FALLS**  
Brgy. Acuña, Tapaz,  
Capiz

the forest reserve namely: Binukot Falls, Dalaman Falls, Catao Falls, and Sinakaan Carabao are waiting to be explored and enjoyed. Moreover, it is also home to diverse flora and fauna which are categorized as critically endangered, endangered, threatened, vulnerable and endemic based on the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The following flora and fauna are found inside the forest reserve: Lauan, Apitong and Toog, Visayan Warty Pig, Tarictic Hornbill, Visayan Spotted Deer, Mabitang or Panay Monitor Lizard, Dulungan or Rufous-Headed Hornbill and Panay Bushy-Tailed Cloud Rat.

The National integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act or RA 7586 of 1992, as amended by RA 11038 of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) of 2018, encompasses ecologically rich and unique areas and biologically important public lands that are habitats of rare and threatened species of plants and animals which include the Panay River Watershed Forest Reserve.

## PENRO Guimaras encourages the youth to become environmentalists

*The youth is the future of our father land –Dr. Jose Rizal*

PENRO Guimaras involved the youth during the mangrove planting and clean-up activities at Taklong Island National Marine Reserve (TINMR) in the province of Guimaras in observance of the World Earth Day on April 20, 2020.

Students of Sta. Teresa National High School in Jordan, Guimaras State College, and Grace Baptised Activity happily volunteered during the activities and were thus exposed to the manner of protecting and conserving their very own protected area in Guimaras.

Guimarasnon youths also actively listened during the conduct of an orientation on the importance of mangroves by Park Maintenance Fore-

man (PMF) Jhonnys E. Gange. He underscored the fact that mangroves protect the shorelines from devastating storms, waves and floods. Mangrove forests also serve as food source to fishes and help prevent erosion by stabilizing sediments with their tangled root systems. It also maintains good water quality and clarity, filtering pollutants and trapping sediments originating from land.

A total of One Hundred Fifty-five (155) potted seedlings of mangroves (Bakauan and Bungalon species) were planted.

As to the coastal clean-up, the volunteer-students were able to collect approximately 50 kilograms of trash composed of plastic wrappers and

bottles, personal hygiene materials, rubber-shoes, plastic utensils and even cigarette butts.

Those student-volunteers stood out as unique among their peers. While most people their age spent much of their time playing online games or posting stuff in social media, they took the time to contribute something towards environmental protection.

“We want to continue encouraging the youth to be environmentalists as it help them recognize their power to create good changes. Given the fact that they will inherit this environment and its natural resources, they must also take care of it for the generation that will come.





# Manglinong assumes post as new PENRO of Iloilo



**T**he leadership change has come in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources –Provincial ENR Office (DENR-PENRO) Iloilo.

On March 10, 2020, PENR Officer Forester Salvador C. Manglinong, Jr. was installed as the new PENRO of Iloilo, replacing Forester Raul L. Lorilla who is now the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) for Management Services.

The turn-over of the symbolic key of responsibility was done from Lorilla to Manglinong and was officiated by ARD Livino B. Duran of the Technical Services. Duran gave the inspirational mes-

sage during the turn-over and was happy for the promotion of the two officials.

Prior to his promotion, Manglinong is serving as the Community ENR Officer for Guimbal. He left the post to an equally competent CENRO in the person of Forester Vicente T. Mellizas, Jr. OIC CENR Officer Vicente T. Mellizas, Jr. also gave a message during the turn-over and thanked everyone for the support and assured CENRO Guimbal staff of his dedication and full support to the activities of the office.

Manglinong also expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome of the personnel and staff of

PENRO Iloilo as well as CENROs Guimbal, Barotac Nuevo and Sara as their new chief. He emphasized that being in the agency, we need to do our work wholeheartedly and to serve our fellow Filipinos in the best possible ways. "We must always think of the welfare of the people in our community," he said.

As part of Lorilla's farewell, Planning Officer III Aimeline B. Gavilla and DPMO Antonio M. Latoza, Jr. gave a presentation on the highlights of his accomplishments for the past nine (9) years as Iloilo PENR Officer.

## Negros Occidental ensures successful Bamboo ENGP

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# Losses and Gains: A Pandemic Experience

by Engr. Mierbert Wed. M. Naldoza

It all started without warning, whenever life turned upside down. A "new normal" we never asked for. Then, a new gloomy day enveloped the world. Having no choice but to survive, I wake up day after day. A little lost. A lot frightened. With much too heavy heart, I carried on, just like everyone else. The vehicle was already parked around the corner to take me and the team for an inspection. When I opened the door, there was no greeting. Everyone was wary and silent. We donned this fear in our sleeves, divided with transparent cellophanes dangling from the ceiling of the car. Life and work was never like this. At least not before the Covid-19 slipped into our lives like a burglar in the night. Unannounced. Prepared to steal and kill.

As the silence ensued, the radio broke it with bad news. The positive cases has hit the 30,000 mark, 9 more lives lost, and none got healed. I feel us all inching away from each other, a meter would seem oceans apart. An ocean apart from anyone would mean security. But no one felt safe. We have dreaded communing with the public, outside the comfort of our homes or offices. The divide and mistrust was tangible, but the virus was not. More than 60 days in hopeless isolation could do that. It

has cost me my trust, positivity, and openness. All the characters I have cultivated vanished into thin air, replaced with crippling anxiety. I could not even give a smile. The mask made smiling futile. The car pulled over; we arrived at the barangay.

The Punong Barangay reached out for a handshake, but immediately pulled away. Contact. I longed for yet feared it. We have abandoned physical touch, and with it, acts of courtesy and goodwill. We exchanged concise greetings and informed him of our visit. The connections we try to make with people, we forcibly and reluctantly cut them. No more small, funny talks. No more cheerful laughter. Just a few necessary words. We walked and panted as we proceeded to the area for inspection. Long, rocky roads are exhausting to travel by with our masks on. The fresh air brushed against our hair, but never our cheeks. I wanted to breathe it. I yearned to inhale the fresh breeze that the city could not offer. But I just cannot risk it. So we gasped and sweated behind our protective masks until we reached the site.

It was somewhere I have been before, however, it seemed different. The area seemed calm and at peace. While we lied on couches, scared and alone, nature was healing on its own. The

trees looked sturdier. The grasses are greener. Amidst the lush and thriving greenery, beside the babbling brook, after months of anxiety and fear, I finally felt at ease. The pandemic has made this more habitable for the flora and fauna. Humanity's cease from exploit made the Earth safer for its other dwellers. This scene before us reminded us of our work as DENR personnel, to keep and protect these God-given gifts. To preserve and conserve what illicit activities has try to take and ruin, time and time again. As unexpectedly as the virus showed up, we gained our sense of dignity and pride. That day brought me back on the right track.

As a DENR frontliner, doing our job entails sacrifice and a bit of bravery. It gives us a sense of pride and dignity that the days of quarantine slowly and furtively stole from us. The honor to serve and protect gives us back the purpose and drive that held our heads high. The pandemic might not end tomorrow, or the day after. But humans, by nature, are tenacious and persistent. So no matter how low and down-trodden times may get, humanity will carry on and evolve to become better. And as we do, we will protect and value what Mother Earth and us hold precious.



## EMB 6 & Robinsons Mall launch R Love to Volunteer Program

In promoting the objectives of the National Zero Waste Month in January 2020, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region 6 collaborated with Robinsons Mall Pavia for the launching of R Love to Volunteer Program on January 30-31, 2020.

The event aims to inculcate among the young ones the need to be responsible in reducing wastes and to encourage the public to maintain the cleanliness of the environment.

On January 30, 2020, a free screening of environmental clips were prepared for the public at Robinsons Movieworld. More than 300 students from Pavia National High School watched the

videos on the effects of human activities to the environment.

An on-the-spot poster-making contest was also conducted and was participated in by the different elementary schools in Pavia. Winners of the said contest received a gift certificate from Robinsons and their artworks shall be utilized for environmental campaigns.

Forty-two (42) Local Government Units (LGUs) with an approved 10-year Solid Waste Management Plans were also recognized during the event.

Guest Speaker, Asec. Paul Pangilinan, Commissioner-at-large of the National Youth

Commission spoke about the role of the youth in pursuing a cleaner and healthier environment and urged everyone to take action.

Employees of Robinsons Mall Pavia, environmentalists, officials and residents of different barangays together with EMB 6 staff conducted a plogging from Robinsons Mall to Pavia Plaza on January 31, 2020. A total of 558 kilos of trash were collected and were exchanged for sacks of rice.

Plogging is a way of incorporating the habit of jogging while picking up trashes, segregating them and throwing them in correct trash bins.



# SEC CIMATU AS VISAYAS COVID-19 OVERSEER, DENR 6 SUPPORTS COMPASSION PROJECT

**N**otwithstanding the daunting tasks of being an Environment Chief and as Cabinet Officer for Regional Development and Security (CORDS), Secretary Roy A. Cimatu bravely rise up to the challenge of once again lending a strong hand to assist Cebu City's fight against COVID-19.

Secretary Cimatu was appointed by President Duterte as the COVID-19 Task Force Visayas overseer especially for Cebu City. His task is to oversee and evaluate the city's response towards the coronavirus disease 2019 after it was placed under an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) due to the rapid increase in COVID-19 infections, ranging from severe to critical. The situation has greatly impacted on Cebu City's health care system and this prompted the national government to intervene by sending Secretary Cimatu to assist the local leaders to help flatten the curve.

Upon setting foot in Cebu, Secretary Cimatu met with the barangay officials with high number of active COVID-19 cases. He relayed to them that President Duterte's directive was "to help people of Cebu understand the problem." He emphasized to the people the need to follow ECQ guidelines

of staying at home, wearing of masks and observance of social distancing so as to contain the spread of the virus.

Cimatu was happy to note the increase in compliance rate from 50 percent before he came to at least 80 to 90 percent when his support was felt by the people. Both Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella and Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia were supportive of Cimatu's stay in Cebu.

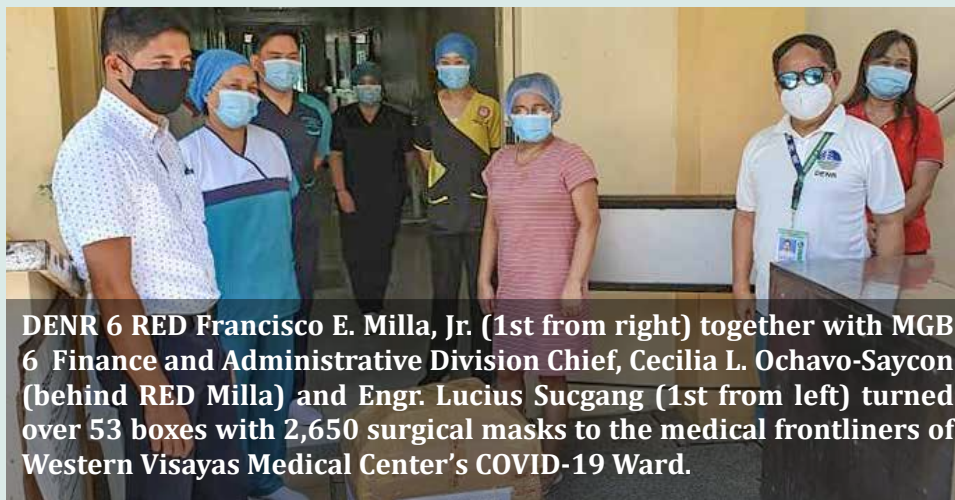
On the other hand, as Secretary Cimatu was busy helping out Cebu in its fight against COVID-19, DENR offices around the country were also making donations for the frontliners and affected communities in their areas of responsibility in support to the Community Passion or Compassion Project.

In Region 6, the DENR regional and field offices along with the two bureaus – the Environmental Management Bureau and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau have conducted series of relief operations to help the frontliners in different hospitals, checkpoints, and communities.

More than Php4-Million in donated cash and kind were gathered by the DENR 6 and made



possible the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment such as facemasks and face shields, sanitation products, food packs, rice and cash assistance. Other beneficiaries of the said donations also include members of the Peoples Organizations (POs) and DENR offices' skeleton workforce who were also economically challenged but continued to render their services despite the health risk brought by the pandemic.



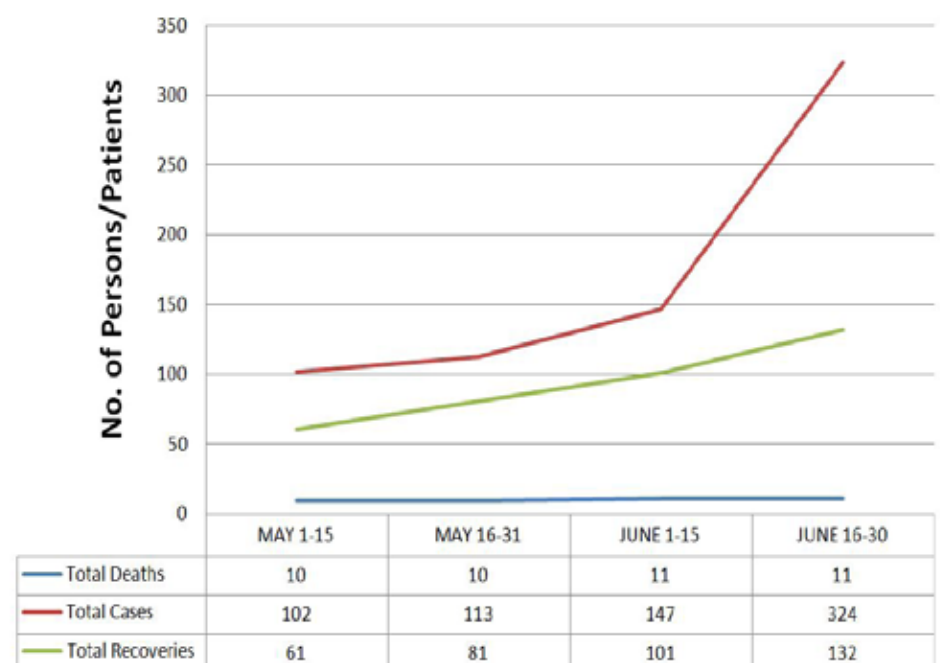
DENR 6 RED Francisco E. Milla, Jr. (1st from right) together with MGB 6 Finance and Administrative Division Chief, Cecilia L. Ochavo-Saycon (behind RED Milla) and Engr. Lucius Sugang (1st from left) turned over 53 boxes with 2,650 surgical masks to the medical frontliners of Western Visayas Medical Center's COVID-19 Ward.



The DENR Employees Multipurpose Cooperative distributed relief goods to the CBFM-PO members and NGP beneficiaries in barangays Linab and Punong in Maasin, Iloilo; and barangays Bugang, Bagsakan and Punong in Alimodian, Iloilo.

## WESTERN VISAYAS COVID-19 UPDATES

The Line Graph shows data on COVID-19 Total Cases, Recoveries, and Deaths in the Region in the months of May and June, 2020.



During the months of May & June 2020, the region had recorded a total of 324 COVID-19 positive cases, with 132 recoveries and 11 deaths.