



# Kalikasan

## Western Visayas



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## SECRETARY CIMATU CONTINUES TO KEEP AN EYE ON BORACAY AND MALANDOG

Two beautiful places – one is an island, another is a historic river. Both are closely kept under the watchful care of DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu continues to keep an eye on Boracay Island which is located in the province of Aklan and Malandog River in the province of Antique.

Both rehabilitation projects would remain as his strongest legacies here in Western Visayas, even the nation. Deemed as an impossible thing to be rehabilitated, Boracay Island was on the verge of an environmental disaster when Secretary Cimatu set out on a mission of rehabilitating it.

At the order of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, Cimatu launched the rehabilitation of Boracay Island on April 26, 2018 when it was temporarily declared closed to tourists. After six

months, in October 26, 2018 Cimatu untaged the island as “no longer a cesspool” when he declared the island open and proudly presented to all the new Boracay, which is way more clean than it used to be in decades.

As the Chairperson of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force or BIATF, Cimatu led a historic BIATF Principals Meeting on March 18, 2021 with the unanimous decision of pushing for the creation of a Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) as a regulatory body, not as a Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation (GOCC).

“After considering the progress of the rehabilitation and the realities on the ground, this group of diverse opinions unanimously concluded that a regulatory body similar to the BIATF would best serve the needs of Boracay Island and its people,” Cimatu said.

While the BIDA Bill is still pending in both Houses of Congress however, Cimatu and the rest of the members of the BIATF hope that the President will allow the Task Force to continue its work, which will ensure the smooth transition of management and turn-over of responsibilities to the incoming body.

Meanwhile, the Malandog River Rehabilitation and Development Project (MaRiReDeP) is ongoing and beautiful transformations are taking shape continuously. Both the Provincial ENR Office and the various local government units in the province of Antique were closely working together on this.

As the cradle of civilization in Panay Island, Cimatu intends to preserve the history of Malandog River for all Antiqueños. He further aims to transform Malandog River back into

# Forester Aborka takes the helm as PENRO Aklan

In time for the observance of the National Women's month, Forester Merlene B. Aborka was promoted as full-pledge PENR Officer on March 9, 2021 by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Aborka took the helm as OIC of PENR Office in Aklan in July 22, 2019 while the Boracay Island rehabilitation continues. She was given the "on-the-spot promotion" by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu after she graduated as the Class Valedictorian of the ENR Academy Management Course, Class 404 - Philippine Cobra in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija.

As a full-pledged PENR Officer, Aborka became the first woman PENRO in Region 6 to be entrusted with the position and authority. Indeed, as a woman leader and a Forester, she fit right into the National Women's Month theme: "Juana Laban sa Krisis sa Klima at Pandemya: Kaya!"

Aborka is a graduate of Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of the Philippines - Los Baños and also finished here Bachelor of Laws from Aklan Catholic College.



PENR Officer Merlene B. Aborka's oathtaking was done on March 9, 2021 at the DENR Central Office before Secretary Roy A. Cimatu. Other employees witnessed the oathtaking via Zoom online video conferencing. Aborka is the first woman DENR PENRO in Western Visayas.



## DENR 6 celebrates National Women's Month, gives tribute to all of its Juanas

In celebration of the National Women's Month, the DENR 6 has paid tribute to the women leaders of the Department by displaying them on a National Women's Month Board and remembered their contribution to the Department.

With more than a thousand work forces in the region, DENR 6 has women leaders holding key posts from section chiefs to division chiefs to Community ENR Officers. During the Women's Month, a woman Provincial ENR Officer was added to its roster of empowered women leaders.

As an agency whose women workers have

played a great part in the agency's decision making, the DENR 6 can really boast of its empowered women leaders.

This year, Forester Edna B. Locsin, also the Chairperson of the Regional Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System, discussed the importance of the yearly observance through a short lecture and the lined-up activities for the month during the opening program on March 1, 2021.

With this year's DENR-adopted theme: *Juana Laban sa Krisis sa Klima at Pandemya: Kaya!*, the empowered women of the Department has risen

up to the challenge of continuing the efforts in addressing climate change crisis behind the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both gender issues and pursuing good environmental governance have become extra challenging for women in this trialsome times but they continue to thrive, and to make positive changes.

"The women leaders of the DENR 6 are a force to reckon with, so to speak. They have made great contribution in shaping the society we have today in this part of the country," said Francisco E. Milla, Jr., regional executive director of DENR 6.



**IT'S PURPLE MONDAY!** Employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources wear their purple shirts every Monday in observance of the National Women's Month Celebration for 2021. The DENR adopted the theme: "Juana Laban sa Krisis sa Klima at Pandemya: Kaya!" In photo are some of the DENR 6 key officials led by Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. (4th from right, standing), Regional Director Raul A. Laput (6th from right, standing) of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, ARD Livino B. Duran of the Technical Services (3rd from right, standing), ARD Raul L. Lorilla of the Management Services (5th from right, standing), ARD Ivone D. Reyes of Special Concerns (7th from right, standing), Surveys and Mapping Division Chief Meliton Solas (7th from right, standing), Planning and Management Division Chief Edna B. Locsin (2nd from left, seated), Enforcement Division Chief Melissa June Garol (5th from right, standing) and DENR Employees' Union President Emma P. Delima (1st from left, seated). /DENR 6

# DENR 6, CSC unveil PRIME-HRM Bronze Award



CSC Region 6 officials from left, namely: CSC Region 6 Field Office - Iloilo Director John Esar T. David, CSC-6 Regional Director IV Nelson G. Sarmiento, DENR Region 6 Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr., CSC Assistant Commissioner Rodolfo B. Encajonado, Acting Regional Director III Erna T. Elizan, Assistant Regional Director for Management Services Raul L. Lorilla, Assistant Regional Director for Special Concerns Ivane D. Reyes and Administrative Division Chief Ernest C. Federiso unveil the Plaque of Recognition for the PRIME-HRM Bronze Award at DENR Courtyard.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 6 has memorialized its PRIME HRM Maturity Level 2 Bronze Award from the Civil Service Commission (CSC) by pinning it on a wall inside the regional office, recently.

DENR 6 is one of the first national government agencies to have been conferred the PRIME HRM Maturity Level 2 Bronze Award by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

With such achieved feat in human resource management and organizational development, the DENR 6 facilitated a memorable unveiling ceremony that was graced by no less than CSC Assistant Commissioner Rodolfo B. Encajonado together with CSC 6 Regional Director IV Nelson G. Sarmiento, Acting Regional Director III Erna T. Elizan, and CSC Region 6 Field Office - Iloilo Director John Esar T. David.

The PRIME-HRM or the Program to

Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management is one of the priority programs of the CSC which supports the institution's goal to be globally recognized as a Center of Excellence in Human Resource and Organizational Development.

"Having been conferred the Maturity Level II, this means that DENR in this region has demonstrated readiness in exercising delegated HR functions. The recognition was a result of DENR 6's determination and unrelenting efforts to continually promote people excellence for efficient and effective public service delivery," said Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr.

DENR Region 6 was also granted privileges such as the authority to approve appointments subject to post audit and also to maintain the status under Level 2 and continue to improve in its HRM systems for the next higher level.

## Negros Occ records highest number of waterbirds

Out of the six provinces in Western Visayas, the province of Negros Occidental have seen and recorded thousands of migratory birds during its Annual Waterbird Census (AWC) 2021 conducted in January.

Out of 80,150 recorded waterbirds during the AWC for the whole of Western Visayas, Negros Occidental recorded more than 53,000. This was mainly due to the presence of the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area (NOCWCA), designated as the country's 7th Ramsar Site.

NOCWCA covers more than 230,000 hectares with 110 kilometers of coastline that cuts across 52 coastal barangays of the three cities in Bago, Himamaylan and Kabankalan, and seven municipalities, namely: Pulupandan, Valladolid, San Enrique, Pontevedra, Hinigaran, Binalbagan and Ilog.

Most of the top three migratory bird species were also recorded in Negros Occidental. Out of the total counted Great knots (*Calidris tenuirostris*) which numbered to 12,930, there were 4,848 recorded from Cadiz Wetlands. From the 11,408 Little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) counted, 4,706 of them were seen in the Brgy. Andulauan, Ilog and out of the 10,107 Whiskered tern (*Chidonias hybridus*), there were 995 counted in from Brgy. 2, Ilog.

One of the objectives of the Annual Waterbird Census is to monitor on an annual basis the status and condition of wetlands.



Thousands of migratory birds flocked to the NOCWCA each year.

# Release of Macaque highlights CENRO Guimbal's World Wildlife Day 2021 celebration



One Philippine Long-tailed Macaque (*Macaca fascicularis philippensis*) was released on March 2, 2021 at the Maasin Watershed Forest Reserve, thereby highlighting CENRO Guimbal's observance of World Wildlife Day 2021.

The domesticated monkey was turned over to CENRO Guimbal last February 2021 and was found in good condition. Long-tailed macaques are known to be "ecologically diverse." Some of their habitats that were found are primary forests, disturbed and secondary forests, and riverine and coastal forests of nipa palm and mangrove. Long-tailed macaques live most successfully in disturbed habitats and on the periphery of forests.

March 3 of this year marked the celebration of World Wildlife Day with the theme: "Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet".

Another activity was the installation of signage on the identified nesting sites of Pawikan marine turtles at Brgy. Crossing Dapuyan, San Joaquin and Brgy. Nanga, Guimbal, both in Iloilo province. This was conducted on March 3. The signage contains ways to respond to marine

turtle incidents such as when caught in fishing gear and hook, stranded (dead or alive), nesting turtles, hatchlings, and hatchery as well as the fines and penalties. Posters and IEC Materials were also distributed to Brgy. Officials./

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its once pristine state. The Sunset View Park is underway with an attractive esplanade where even locals could enjoy the amazing sunset view right where they are.

Another wonderful piece to the development in Malandog would be the balangay-inspired structure of PENRO Antique building. It shall be built overlooking the Malandog River in Maybato Sur in San Jose, Antique. On March 19, 2021, DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu led the groundbreaking ceremony of the new building.

"Today marks another milestone in the history of DENR here in the province of Antique as we embark in the realization of protecting the Malandog River and by preserving and recovering its

natural heritage," Cimatu addressed local officials during the ceremony.

Secretary Cimatu disclosed that a P50-M budget for Phase 1 building component has been earmarked by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). By its Phase 2, an additional budget of P58-M is yet to be approved which will be intended for its site development. Phase 2 will include road works, canopy space, office furniture, perimeter

fence, parking, rainwater catching facilities, and placement of ornamental plants.

The balangay-inspired PENRO building will be a two-storey "green" structure with a floor area of 1,516.77 square meters. The DENR aims to utilize the power of renewable energy sources such as the wind and solar. Secretary Cimatu's marching order was to finish the building construction by December 2021.



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# World Wildlife Day 2021 at TINMR

In observance of the World Wildlife Day 2021, the Conservation and Development Division (CDD) of DENR 6 spearheaded an event at Taklong Island National Marine Reserve (TINMR) on March 3, 2021.

Forester Mary Ann Astete briefly discussed to the participants the importance of World

Wildlife Day 2021 with the theme: Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet and the benefits of "forest bathing."

On the other hand, TINMR Park Foreman Johnnys Gange presented the different wildlife species that could be found within Taklong Island. After the lecturette, the group went out to experience "forest bathing" led by Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. and Guimaras PENR Officer Vicente A. Sardina.

By engaging in "forest bathing", participants get to contemplate on the beauty of the mangrove forest and took in all the sights, sounds and even the smell of the forest. Some of the benefits of forest bathing include reduction of stress, improving one's mood and boosting our immune system.

Others who joined in the activity were members of the POs, Brgy. Captains of San Roque and La Paz and representatives from LGU Nueva Valencia.



## Mangrove Tree Growing for World Water Day 2021

There is nothing better humans can contribute towards sustaining clean water than engage in mangrove tree growing.

Thus, on March 27, 2021, volunteers to the mangrove tree growing activity in the province of Capiz readied themselves very early in the morning and headed to Brgy. Buntod in Panay.

A total of 1,350 mangrove seedlings of bakhaw lalake (350 pieces) and apiapi bayabason (1,000 pieces) were planted by sixty three (63) volunteers, coming from the Highway Patrol Group of Capiz, Full Spectrum Riders Association of the Philippines (FSRAP) and Federation of Bantay Bayan Inc. (FBI) in partnership with the local government unit of Panay.

Also supporting the event were the employees of the Municipal ENR Office of Panay, Barangay Buntod and members of Buntod Katibayugan ka mga Mangingisda kag Kababainhan.

This year's World Water Day theme is: Valuing Water. As such, mangroves are essential in maintaining water quality. Their dense root system and surrounding vegetation has the ability to filter and trap sediments, heavy metals and other pollutants preventing it to reach our freshwater sources which has a significant impact towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6: Water and Sanitation for all by 2030.



## Bagongbong Hanging Bridge is now open for the community

A 50-linear meter hanging bridge in the far-flung Brgy. Bagongbong in the town of Lambunao, Iloilo has been opened for use of the local folks.

The hanging bridge was constructed under the Forestland Management Project (FMP) which was implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 6 with the local government unit of Lambunao. This project is in pursuit of sustainable forest management, aimed at providing livelihood to the community while protecting and conserving our forest resources.

With this hanging bridge, farm produce coming from Bagongbong and Cabatangan is now having good access in reaching their local markets. A big help to our once marginalized upland farmers./



Left: Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENR) Officer Salvador C. Manglinong, Jr., Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla, Jr., Iloilo City Mayor Jerry P. Treñas, Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) Officer Vicente T. Mellizas, Jr. of CENRO Guimbal and Engr. Noel Z. Hechanova, City ENR Officer inked the agreements during the MOA signing./DENR 6

## DENR 6, Iloilo City gov't sign two MOAs for protection of forestland and coastal areas in the city

Two (2) Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) for environmental protection and development of two areas in the city were signed last February 17, 2021 at the Iloilo City Hall.

Under the MOA, the Thirty Five (35) hectares of forestland area located in Brgy. Hinactacan, Lapaz District will be protected and sustained as Eco-Park Development and Mangrove Management Rehabilitation, Protection and Enhancement Project or to be known as "Eco-Park 2".

This will further help showcase the natural mangrove forests in the city as a social laboratory for marine and other wildlife management researches in the urban center. The Agreement has a binding period of five years and may renew upon agreement of both parties.

A separate MOA was also signed for the development, management, protection and conservation of the Sixteen Thousand Six Hundred Ninety-Five (16,695) square meters coastal area along Brgy. Boulevard in Molo District.

This move is pursuant to Republic Act

No. 4767, also known as "An Act Declaring the Boulevard, Public Lands Between It and the Shores and the Territorial Waters from the District of Molo to the District of Arevalo, Within the City of Iloilo, A City Park, to be known as Iloilo City Park" that was approved on June 18, 1966.

An Iloilo Botanical Garden and Biodiversity Conservation Park Project known as "Iloilo City Park" will be implemented in the area. It will also showcase the marine and terrestrial biodiversity, especially those endemic in the area. This agreement has a binding period of Fifteen (15) years and may renew upon mutual agreement of the parties.

Regional Executive Director (RED) Francisco E. Milla, Jr. of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region VI and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry P. Treñas signed the two MOAs. Witnesses to the MOA were Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENR) Officer Salvador C. Manglinong, Jr., Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) Officer Vicente T. Mellizas, Jr. of CENRO Guimbal and Engr. Noel Z. Hechanova, City ENR Officer.

# DENR 6 mourns the loss of the woman behind Secretary Cimat

She was the love of his life, his own brave soldier, his loyal companion. Until the day she had to bid him goodbye.

The beautiful and endearing Fe Aguillon Cimat, wife to former general and today, DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimat, quietly passed away on February 20, 2021 due to a lingering illness.

Ma'am Fe, a native of San Jose, Antique, is Secretary Cimat's foremost cheerleader, consultant and critic, all rolled into one. She was the positive influence behind the big accomplishments he achieved while still in the military, as peace envoy and as DENR Secretary.

In his eulogy during the necrological service on February 25, 2021 at the couple's residence in San Jose, Antique, Regional Executive Director



File photo courtesy of Mrs. Fe's colleagues in the AFP Generals' Wives organization

Francisco "Toto" E. Milla, Jr. of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 6, said: "Behind the success of every man is a woman." Milla noted how Ma'am Fe had served as the

Secretary's inspiration and the reason behind DENR's success in environmental governance of the country by "making exemplary, radical changes for sustainable development."

A. Cimat, recounted his days with Ma'am Fe and how his ever supportive wife sacrificed a lot of things beginning after the wedding. He remembered how while still in honeymoon, he was called back to service. He was then assigned in Marawi, and he took Ma'am Fe with him. From there, they both journeyed in life together. She was always with him, a very supportive, loving companion who provided insights into the many things he planned to do.

his lifetime award to Ma'am Fe as part of his eulogy during the necrological service. Cimat's lifetime award is a recognition of his 50 years in military service, foreign service and civil service.

## ENR AMBASSADORS AS PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

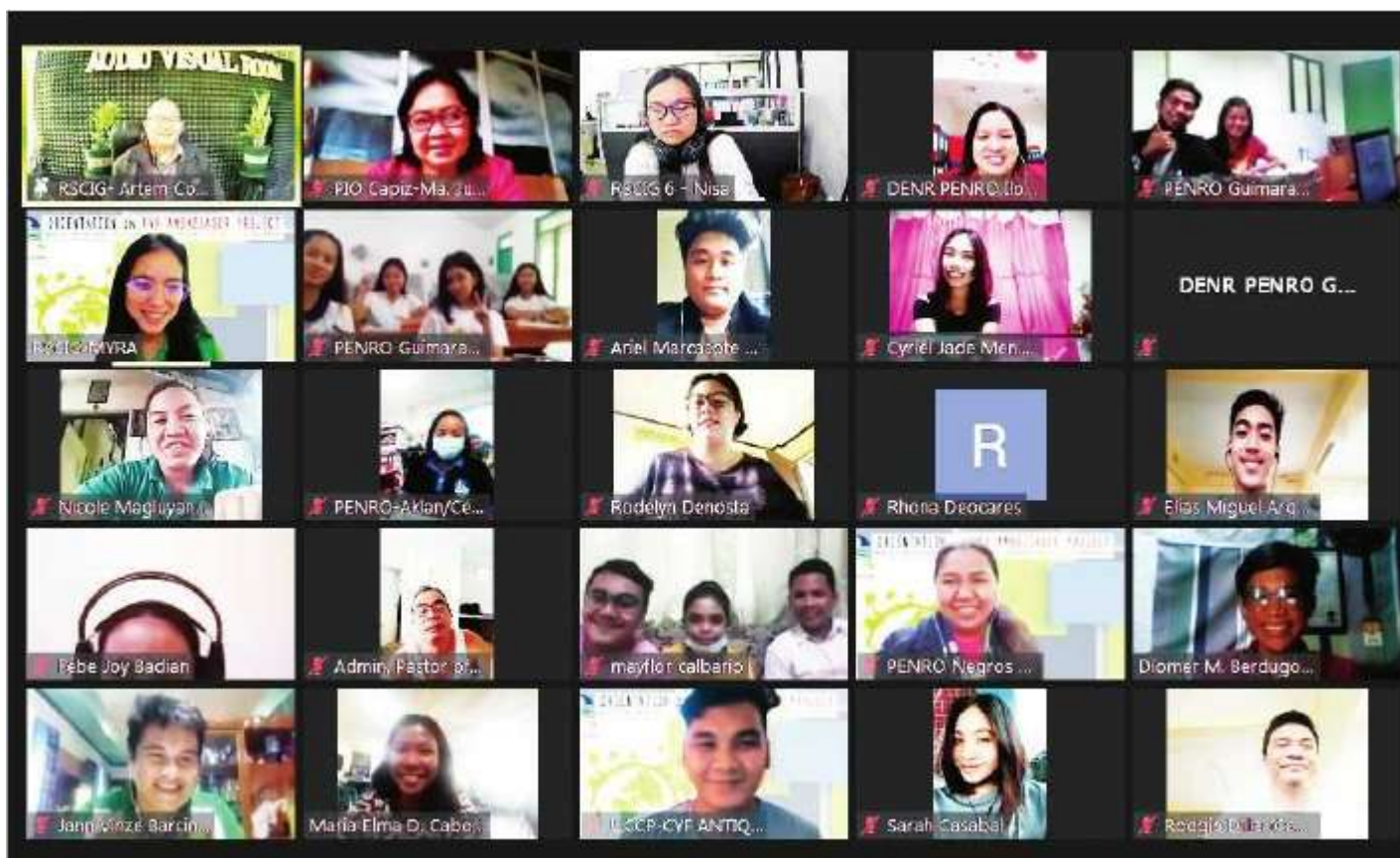
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 6 has launched the ENR Ambassadors Project under the Tayo ang Kalikasan (TAK)/Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group (RSCIG), formerly known as Regional Public Affairs Office (RPAO).

The ENR Ambassadors were endorsed by their respective school/organization heads and were verified by Information Officers (IOs) from the respective DENR 6's field offices. The ENR Ambassadors are to serve as an effective partner and force multiplier in changing behavior of the people towards environmental stewardship.

There are five (5) ENR Ambassadors for every province in Western Visayas, namely; Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo and Negros Occidental, who were introduced to regional executive director Francisco E. Milla, Jr. during the virtual ENR Ambassadors Project Briefing conducted on January 19, 2021.

In his inspirational message during the virtual briefing, RED Milla encouraged the students/youths to be the catalyst of change, especially in environmental protection.

"We all need to work together. We need to develop as a team, as a family, for the betterment of our



Left photo: ENR Ambassadors and academe/organization partners attended the virtual ENR Ambassadors briefing last January 19, 2021. Right photo: Turnover of communication support gadgets and basic health supplies (face masks, face shields, and alcohol) intended for the PENRO designated Information Offices and their alternates./DENR 6

natural resources. The DENR 6 will always be here to guide you all the way to reach your dreams to be the better version of yourselves, as the role model for other students/

youths in pushing for a healthy and clean environment", said RED Milla.

A total of thirty (30) Ambassadors attended the briefing from seventeen (17) academic

institutions and three (3) partner organizations. The briefing was conducted prior to the signing of the Memorandum of Partnership

# EMB 6 LED CLOSURE OF OPEN DUMPSITES

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 6 led the closure of five open dumpsites in the region on January 25, 2021.

Atty. Arjunn Marven Calvo, Chief of EMB 6 Legal Section and Forester Vicente S. Losbañes, Chief of Solid Waste Section administered the said closure.

The five local government units (LGUs) that voluntarily closed their open dumpsites were: San Jose de Buenavista in Antique province, Tapaz and President Roxas in Capiz province, and Banga and Libacao in Aklan province.

From the time of the closure, the EMB 6

have been assisting these LGUs in the proper rehabilitation of their respective dumpsites. The Bureau will also ensure the proper implementation of DENR DAO No. 9 s. of 2006 or the Guidelines for Safe Closure and Rehabilitation.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered all EMB regional directors to step up their efforts against open dumpsites in their respective areas of jurisdiction, noting that Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000) prohibits these facilities. However, he acknowledged that

much of the accomplishment was inspired by DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda's efforts to close open dumps in Bataan, Pampanga and Cavite provinces.

"His aggressive yet decisive move is being followed by our EMB regional directors nationwide," he said.

Antiporda assured DENR will "excellerate" or excel and accelerate efforts to implement RA 9003. "In the next two years, we commit to work even harder," he said in his message during the 20th anniversary celebration of Republic Act 9003



## Women engage in seedling production

As part of the International Day of Forests and World Water Day celebration, as well as to culminate this year's Women's Month 2021, women employees of PENRO Negros Occidental engaged in seedling production activity (bagging/sowing) in support to ENGP's tree growing activity on March 30, 2021.

Members of the Kanla-on Green Brigade also assisted the PENRO personnel and gave an orientation among the employees on the rich flora and fauna diversity of Mount Kanla-on Natural Park (MKNP).

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The employees and officials of DENR offices nationwide deeply mourned and shared the grief of Secretary Cimatu and of the Aguillon family. Despite his loss, Secretary Cimatu is intent on pursuing the many environmental projects he had started, especially in Western Visayas.

An experiential learning/exposure trip was also conducted where some personnel were able to trek and witness the grandeur of the waterfalls at Guintubdan, Brgy. Ara-al, La Carlota City, Negros Occidental.

Meanwhile, personnel of CENRO Cadiz have planted 50 mixed species of trees (Bacan, Mahogany, and Narra) within the CENRO Cadiz vicinity, also in celebration of the IDF. This initiative calls for re-greening the office vicinity in the efforts to continue the protection of the environment.

....from page 7 ENR

Agreement (MOPA) in order to capacitate the students/youths in their future responsibilities. The briefing was led by the RSCIG Chief, Artemio Salvador C. Colacion, who oriented the ENR Ambassadors of their duties and responsibilities that will have a duration of one year.