

REFERENCE AND RESEARCH BUREAU  
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

**THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN  
FOR PALAWAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ECOTOURISM IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>**

The formulation and implementation of plans, programs and projects affecting the environment and natural resources of Palawan are guided by the provisions of Republic Act No. 7611, otherwise known as the “Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan Act” (June 19, 1992). This Act serves as a comprehensive framework for the sustainable development of Palawan compatible with protecting and enhancing the natural resources and endangered environment of the province [Sec. 4, R.A. 7611].

The first part of this report presents a background information about the island province of Palawan with a table of Palawan’s national parks, wildlife and marine reserves which shows the name, location, description and laws pertinent to its administration and/or management. The second part deals with the SEP for Palawan Act which contains the SEP philosophy, its legal effects, administrative machinery for its implementation, the main strategy of SEP and thrusts for the year 2003. Included also are: 1) ecotourism development in the Philippines, 2) criteria for declaring an area as ecotourism destination, 3) key ecotourism sites and, 4) the processes involved in the development of ecotourism destinations.

A list of House bills filed during the Twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) Congress proposing the creation and establishment of protected areas and natural parks is incorporated showing their authors and status.

---

<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared in connection with a letter from The Waters Society for the Creation of a Great Palawan Park and more protected areas in the Philippines.

## **I. PALAWAN PROVINCIAL PROFILE**

### **A. Basic Data<sup>2</sup>**

#### Climate

Inter-tropical Converging Zone

Northeast Moonsoon (Amihan) : November to February

Southwest Moonsoon (Habagat): March to May

#### Rainfalls

Favorable Months : January to May

Rainy Months : June to December

Land Area : 1,489,655 has.

Length : Stretches 650 km. tip to tip  
Mainland 425 km. long

No. of islands : 1,780 Islands and islets

#### Mountain Ranges:

Mt. Matalingahan – Elevation 2,086 in between Brookes Pt. And  
Bataraza

Cleopatra's Needle – Elevation 1,585 in Puerto Princesa City

Total Inhabitants : about 161,912 (as of May, 2000) Three fourths of the  
population resides in the city proper<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Tourist Information Guide: Palawan Every Island an Adventure; Provincial Government of Palawan, PGO-Tourism Division, Provincial Capital Building, Puerto Princesa City

<sup>3</sup> Puerto Princesa City the Ecotourism & Geological Destination, City Tourism Office, p. 2

## **B. Natural Resources<sup>4</sup>**

Palawan is situated southwest and west of the main chain of Philippine Islands. Considered as the largest province of the country, it occupies 1,489,655 hectares or five percent (5%) of the national territory. It is bounded on the west by South China Sea and on the east by the Sulu Sea. The southernmost tip of Palawan points to the Island of Borneo.

Palawan has 1,780 islands and islets that fall under three (3) major groups: the Calamian island group in the north; Dumaran-Cuyo group in the northeast and the Balabae-Bugsok group in the southwest. It has four hundred thirty-one (431) barangays; twenty-two (22) municipalities including the newly created municipality of Culion and one city. The lone city is Puerto Princesa which is the capital of the province.

The provincial economy is basically agricultural with mining and logging playing secondary roles. Agriculture consists of raising three major crops – palay, corn and coconut. Other crops grown are bananas, rootcrops like cassava and sweet potatoes, cashew and vegetables.

Mineral resources in commercial quantity include nickel, copper, manganese and chromite. Other deposits are silica sand, limestone, gold, iron, pyrite, lead, sulphur and guano. In terms of firm reserves and mineral production value, nickel ranks first although silica sand has the biggest share in the total provincial mineral production value.

The province is notably known for its rich and varied flora and fauna. It has a variety of ornamental plant trees, flowering plants such as the Palawan Cherry Blossoms, species of orchids, ferns and other tropical flora that has not yet been identified and classified. By virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 219 dated July 2, 1967, the entire province of Palawan was declared a game refuge and bird sanctuary to protect the province's rare and endangered wildlife such as the Mouse Deer, Scaly Ant Eater, Palawan Deer and many others. It is also the habitat of many of the most colorful birds like the Palawan Peacock Pheasant, Siete Colores, wild doves, Nutmeg Imperial Pigeons and other kinds of birds. The avian number 206 species. The Philippines has a thousand species of wildlife, of this number, 232 species are found in Palawan. Since the province possesses the biggest reservation of Philippine wildlife in land and sea, it has earned the title Haven of Rare Philippine Wildlife.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Aquino Administration Major Development, Programs & Projects: Palawan, NEDA, pp. 3-4 & 16.

**C. Palawan’s Premiere Tourist Spots and Protected Areas: Where Nature is at its Best**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Pertinent Laws on Administration and Management</b>
1. Puerto Princesa Subterranean River and National Park (underground river) <sup>5</sup>	Located in Bahile, 81 kms. from the city proper, can be reached through a 1 hr. jeepney ride from Barangay Cabayugan to Sabang, from where one may take a 10-15 minute pumpboat Ride to the Underground River.	Deep cathedral –like caverns within the rugged limestone and marble parks of Mt. St. Paul, flows the underground river running 8 kms. Inland, the river is easily navigable for at least 4 kms. Outside the river’s mouth is a beautiful lagoon with crystal clear waters that teems with fish.	Proclamation 212, November 12, 1999 – Amending Proclamation No. 835 series of 1971, renaming the “St. Paul Subterranean National Park” to Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park; Expanding its Area Coverage to Twenty Two Thousand Two Hundred Two (22,202) hectares and declaring it as a Protected Area Pursuant to R.A. 7586 the National Integrated Areas System Act of 1992 (NIPAS).  Pursuant to R.A. No. 7611 otherwise known as “Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan Act” the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) takes the lead in managing the Park.
2. Tabon Caves (Oldest known habitation in the Southeast Asia and dubbed as the Cradle of Philippine Civilization) <sup>6</sup>	The Tabon Caves Complex is located in Lipuon Point Reservation, a 138 ha. land connected to the mainland by an isthmus covered with mangrove forest. It lies on the northwest of the poblacion of Quezon and bounded on the west by Nakoda Bay, on the east by Malanut Bay and on the south by Sultan Hill. 5 hrs. jeepney or bus ride,	29 caves of habitat and graveyards, of which 17 have been excavated, yielded the skull of the oldest Filipino; the most beautiful earthenware vessel in Southeast Asia that dates back between 890 B.C. and 710 B.C.; fossilized human bones dating back to the Stone Age. The biggest among the caves has a unique geological formation with its mouth situated 110 ft. high up on the western face of Lipuon	Rich in natural and cultural resources, this area was declared a Museum Site Reservation pursuant to Proclamation No. 966 dated April 11, 1977, as mandated by law, the National Museum is tasked to protect and preserve this reservations for future operations.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Tabon Caves Palawan [www.wowphilippines.com.ph](http://www.wowphilippines.com.ph)

	followed by a 20 to 30 minutes pumpboat ride from town of Quezon.	Point overlooking a beautiful bay studded with white sand beach islands.  Habitat to Endemic animals: Tabon bird, Megapodius cumingi, and rare butterflies such as the Trogonoptera trojana.	
3. Ursula Island Game Refuge and Bird Sanctuary <sup>7</sup>	10 nautical miles Southwest of Palawan mainland. 2 hours pumpboat from Bataraza which is 5 hrs. by hired land transportation from Puerto Princesa City.	A secluded sanctuary of the feathered vertebrates mostly wild doves, camagoes and Siete Colores. Two hours before the sun sets, the island becomes a rare spectacle as the birds come home in various flight formations to roost for the night. This flat coralline and forested island is surrounded by wide white sand beaches with crystal-clear waters rich in varied corals and marine life. The waters are so clear that corals can be seen even in the deeper parts of the sea surrounding the island and watchers must camp overnight to witness the birds as they fly-off the island at around 5:30 in the morning.	Administrative Order No. 14 (April 3, 1960) declared the Ursula Island a Game Refuge and Bird Sanctuary. The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) created by RA 7586 or the NIPAS Act of '92 is in charge of the general administration and peripheral protection of the area in coordination with the PCSD.
4. El Nido Marine Reserve <sup>8</sup>	Secluded islands nestling in the South China Sea. El Nido Resorts in Pangulasian and Minoloc Islands located 147.6 nautical miles from Puerto Princesa City.	This group of islands is sanctuary to flocks of swallows. Famous for their limestone cliffs, diverse marine life, white sand beaches and unique flora and fauna.	Pursuant to R.A. 7611 PCSD is the lead agency in the management and protection of the area in cooperation with the officials of the concerned LGU, representatives of the business sector and non-government organizations (NGOs).
5. Calauit National Park <sup>9</sup>	In the Calamian group of Islands north of Palawan	Calauit Island is 3,400 ha. The natural vegetation is lowland forest and mangroves along the coast. Much of the forest has been replaced by plantations, secondary growth and green grassland. It has evolved becoming a home of important Philippine endemic and exotic wildlife from Africa. Marine habitat to the	On August 31, 1976, P.D. 1578 declared Calauit Island a Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary for endemic and exotic animals.  The management of the park used to be under the jurisdiction of the Department of

<sup>7</sup> Supra, Note 3, p. 17

<sup>8</sup> www.pcsd.ph

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

		dugong, sea turtles, giant clams, coral reefs sanctuary to commercial fish species.	Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Conservation and Resource Management Foundation (CRMF) but on December 29, 1994 it was turned over to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)
6. Tubbataha Reef – the National Marine Park <sup>10</sup>	Lies in the middle of the Sulu Sea about 150 kms. Away and 12 hrs. by boat from Puerto Princesa City. The closest human settlement to Tubbataha is the municipality of Cagayancillo Island.	Covers 33,200 ha. and home to a diversity of marine life equal to or greater than any area in the world. The most desirable scuba-diving destination in the Philippines with large marine life such as manta rays, sea turtles, sharks, tuna, dolphins, jackfish, about 46 coral genera, 300 coral species and 379 species of fish.	On August 11, 1988, Presidential Proclamation 306 during the Aquino Administration, proclaimed it as a National Marine Park. In December 1993, the World Conservation Union declared Tubbataha Reefs a World Heritage Site. The PAMB and the PCSD formulated a Master Plan in the management and monitoring activities of the Reefs.

## II. THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (SEP) FOR PALAWAN

### 1. The Law

Republic Act No. 7611 entitled “An Act Adopting the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan, Creating the Administrative Machinery for its Implementation, Converting the Palawan Integrated Area Development Project Office to its Support Staff, and for Other Purposes” was adopted on June 19, 1992 to support and promote the sustainable development goals of the province of Palawan.

#### A. The SEP Philosophy

The SEP shall have, as its general philosophy, the sustainable development of Palawan, which is the improvement in the quality of life of its people in the present and future generations through the use of complementary activities of development and conservation that protect life-support ecosystems and rehabilitate

<sup>10</sup> Tales from Tubbataha, Yasmin D. Arquiza, Alan T. White, Sulu for Marine Conservation Foundation, Inc., and the Bookmark, Inc., 1994, introduction pages 1 & 2 and pp. 2-6, Chap. 1.

exploited areas to allow upcoming generations to sustain development growth. (Sec. 5, R.A. 7611)

**B. Legal Effects**

The SEP serves as the framework to guide the government agencies concerned in the formulation and implementation of plans, programs and projects affecting the environment and natural resources of Palawan. It shall be incorporated in the Regional Development Plan of Region IV and all local governments in Palawan and the concerned national and regional government agencies operating therein shall coordinate and align their projects and corresponding budgets with the projects, programs and policies of the SEP. (Sec. 6, R.A. 7611)

**C. Administrative Machinery for the Implementation of the SEP**

Sec. 16 of R.A. 7611 creates the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) under the Office of the President. Its general function centers on governance, implementation and policy direction of the SEP. PCSD comprises the following:

1. Members of the House of Representatives representing the districts in the Province of Palawan;
2. Deputy Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA);
3. Undersecretary of DENR;
4. Undersecretary for Special Concerns of the Department of Agriculture;
5. Governor of Palawan;
6. Mayor of Puerto Princesa City;
7. President of the Mayor's League of Palawan;
8. President of the Provincial Chapter of the Liga ng mga Barangay;

9. Executive Director of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff; and
10. Other Members from the public or private sectors as the majority of the Council may deem necessary.

**D. The Main Strategy of SEP: The Environmentally Critical Areas Network (ECAN)<sup>11</sup>**

The SEP establishes a graded system of protection and development control over the whole of Palawan, including its tribal lands, forests, mines, agricultural areas, settlement areas, small islands, mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds and the surrounding sea. This serves as the main strategy of SEP and is known as the Environmentally Critical Areas Network (ECAN). The main components of the ECAN are classified into three (3) namely: 1) terrestrial; 2) coastal; and 3) tribal ancestral lands.

Under the ECAN, delineation and demarcation of areas into proper uses are conducted to ensure ecological balance while undertaking socioeconomic development. The PCSD takes the lead role in the implementation of ECAN, with close cooperation with the local government units (LGUs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Preliminary ECAN maps for 21 municipalities have been prepared. ECAN survey teams are conducting actual ground delineation and demarcation activities using the global positioning system (GPS).

To sustain ECAN activities at the municipal level, policy-making bodies were organized in each municipality. LGUs are being provided with technical assistance and relevant information on land use planning to guide them in the identification of allowable activities in each of the ECAN zones. In addition, a regulatory map for the utilization of non-timber forest product resource has been completed. The ECAN maps are being utilized by the Council as bases in the review and evaluation of permit and licenses by the DENR.

---

<sup>11</sup> Implementing Philippine Agenda 21: A Continuing Journey Towards SD, PCSD Coordinating Secretariat, pp. 16 & 17.

## **E. Support Mechanisms of the ECAN**

In support of the ECAN, three mechanisms were established pursuant to R.A. 7611:

### **1. Environmental Monitoring & Evaluation Systems (EMES)**

It ensures a systematic and reliable means of data generation for the various concerns of the SEP. EMES shall also measure changes in environmental status, identify adverse environmental trends and crisis areas, recommend solutions, assess the implementation of the SEP, and suggest measures to make the SEP more responsible to the changing needs. (Sec. 13, Chapter IV)

### **2. Environmental Research (ER)**

It provides a system of research on latest data and information for accurate planning to solve new problems in the implementation of the SEP. As such, the SEP's researches are not confined to the physical and biological features of the environment gathered through surveys, monitoring, resource assessments and research into processes, but also extend to policies and socioeconomic information as they are vital inputs in decision-making and policy direction. (Sec. 14, Chapter IV)

### **3. Environmental Education and Extension (EER)**

It is a system designed to gradually wean the people away from destructive practices and shall recommend practical ways as an alternative. It establishes and organizes linkages between non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business sector representatives, community leaders and staff of line agencies that shall enhance comprehensive public information drive. (Sec. 15, Chapter IV)

## **F. The PCSD Staff<sup>12</sup>**

Providing professional support to the Council is the Palawan Council for the Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS). Composed of a 97-man regular staff, PCSDS undertakes two (2) major functions namely: 1) policy formulation; 2) environmental monitoring coordination and implementation of plans, programs and projects in pursuance of the goals and objectives of the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP). It is also explicit in the above-cited Act that the staff is charged with the task of establishing the ECAN in the Province to set the ground for sustainable development as well as to implement the following support mechanisms: 1) operationalization of the EMES; 2) EEE and 3) ER.

## **G. The Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act and the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act: Additional Sources of Mandate**

Recently, the passage of two (2) laws namely: R.A. 9147 entitled “An Act Providing for the Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Resources and their Habitats, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes” otherwise known as “The Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act” (July 30, 2001) and R.A. 9072 entitled “An Act to Manage and Protect Caves and Cave Resources and for Other Purposes” otherwise known as “National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act” (April 08, 2001) spelled-out additional mandate to the PCSD. Pursuant to these laws, jurisdiction of said resources are vested in the Council.

## **H. Thrusts for the Year 2003<sup>13</sup>**

### **A. SEP Implementation**

#### **1. Environmental Monitoring/Technical Evaluation of Programs and Projects**

The staff will beef-up its monitoring and technical teams in terms of manpower and equipment to meet the increasing requirements for environmental monitoring and evaluation in the Province. As more projects and

---

<sup>12</sup> FY 2003 Budget Briefing Portfolio, PCSD, Office of the President.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 2 & 3.

investments pour into Palawan, increased monitoring and evaluation activities will be demanded from the Staff.

The environmental monitoring attendant to the operations of the Malampaya Camago Gas Project will also be a major task of PCSDS being the lead agency of the multi-partite monitoring team to oversee the Project's effects on Palawan's environment.

## **2. Policy Review and Formulation**

Inasmuch as policy direction is vested in the Council, it is the function of the Staff to conduct appropriate policy studies and advise the Council on the relevance and effectiveness of existing policies and issuances. Priority studies however will be directed at activities that will be relevant in amending or formulating policies on ECAN Zoning which is the basic framework in implementing the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan. Other studies that will be given focus will be those concerning the live fish industry and the mangroves of Palawan.

## **3. Support Mechanisms**

- a) Policy research will remain a priority of the Staff as it provides vital inputs in decision-making and policy formulation. The generation of significant data and information through research will rationalize governance, implementation and policy direction of the SEP.
- b) Environmental education and awareness activities will continue to be implemented by the Staff. Innovative approaches to highlight the importance of sustainable development will be employed. Improved strategies will likewise be adopted to enhance and heighten environmental awareness among a greater number of people.

- c) Institutional strengthening particularly among the stakeholders especially the communities has long been recognized as a major determinant of sustainability. In all staff activities where it is appropriate, it will be the policy of the agency to include community participation, organization and mobilization.
- d) Secretariat activities will continue to be a regular function of the Staff. Technical and administrative assistance will be provided by PCSDS to the Council.

#### **4. Implementation of Republic Act 9147 and Republic Act 9072**

Another function assigned to the Staff with the passage of Republic Act No. 9147 in 2002 is the conservation and protection of wildlife resources and their habitats. Section 4 of the Act identified the Council as the agency that “shall exercise jurisdiction over all terrestrial plant and animal species found in the province of Palawan”. The law requires the agency to review, revise and regularly update said list of species in the Province. This is another monitoring function that will be assumed by the Staff. Likewise, PCSDS will play a key role among others, on matters involving the local transport of wildlife, by- products and derivatives as well as review and evaluation of applications and proposals for the prospecting of wildlife resources in the province of Palawan.

Also with the passage of Republic Act 9072 or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act, PCSDS will likewise assume a major monitoring and evaluation role as explicitly provided for in the said law.

## **B. Implementation of Foreign-Assisted Project**

### **1. Sustainable Environmental Management Project for Northern Palawan (SEMP-NP)**

As stipulated in the loan agreement, PCSDS will be the implementing agency for the ECAN Zoning component of the SEMP-NP. This foreign-assisted project financed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation took off in 2002 covering 14 municipalities in Northern Palawan. The project will focus on 5 priority municipalities namely El Nido, Taytay, Culion, Coron and Busuanga and 9 other non-priority municipalities where the paramount objective is to establish the ECAN zones in these municipalities preparatory to the implementation of the Tourism Plan in Northern Palawan.

Under the ECAN Zoning component, PCSDS will implement three sub-components: a) mapping and digitizing; b) research and c) capacity building. For 2003 the procurement of equipment, production of ECAN maps, resource assessment and capacity building activities like livelihood needs assessment, environmental education and conduct of appropriate trainings necessary in the establishment of ECAN zones in Northern Palawan are major activities that will be undertaken

## **C. Special Project – Calauit Game Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary**

Management efforts will be directed at the propagation of endemic and free-ranging exotic animals. Protection and conservation of terrestrial and marine resources through regular patrolling, seedling production and forage expansion will continue.

### **III. The Ecotourism Development in the Philippines**

#### **A. What is Ecotourism or Ecological Tourism?**

The Tourism Master Plan (TMP) is the framework and guide of the Department of Tourism (DOT) for the sustained development and expansion of the tourism industry of the Philippines. Completed in 1991, it serves as the blueprint for tourism development in the country until the blue print for tourism development in the country to the year 2010. The plan was prepared by the Hoff and Overgaard on behalf of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the DOT.<sup>14</sup>

In June of 1998, the DOT and DENR, through the Protected and Wildlife Bureau, signed Joint Memorandum Circular No. 98-02 establishing the Guidelines for Ecotourism Development. Ecotourism is defined as:

“A low-impact, environmentally-sound and community-participating tourism activity in a given natural environment that enhances the conservation of biophysical and cultural diversity, promotes environmental understanding and education, and yields socio-economic benefits to the concerned community.”

On June 2, 2000, the National Ecotourism Steering Committee, under the National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) created by Executive Order No. 111 (June 17, 1999), entitled “Establishing the Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines” recommended the adoption of operating guidelines for Executive Order No. 111 through NEDC Resolution No. 2001-01. It defines ecotourism as:

“A form of sustainable tourism within a natural and cultural heritage area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors.”

---

<sup>14</sup> Primer on Ecotourism, Product Research and Development, DOT, 1998, p. 1.

The concept of responsible and sustainable tourism aims at leaving the environment as it was found, with the resources of “Nature travel” destinations conserved and kept intact.<sup>15</sup>

## **B. The Criteria for Declaring an Area as an Ecotourism Destination<sup>16</sup>**

1. The area must be rich in natural attractions and conducive to adventure travel (e.g. Taal Volcano in Batangas and Mt. Pulog in Benguet Province).
2. The area has unique features which may be very interesting and educational for visitors (e.g. the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao and the Banaue Rice Terraces in Ifugao).
3. The area is environmentally rich in terms of the number of flora and fauna and the number of endemic species and endangered wildlife (e.g. Palanan Wilderness in Isabela and the forests of Palawan).
4. The area is threatened by other industries like logging which may destroy the (potential) attraction (e.g. wide areas of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range).
5. The historical and cultural attractions of the area are considered outstanding and are very important part of the history and culture of the country (e.g. Vigan Heritage Village and Taal Basilica).
6. The area is not frequented by commercial tourists – the so-called “off the beaten track” (e.g. Sagada in Mt. Province and Batanes).
7. Tourism may help in the rehabilitation and preservation of the biodiversity or environment of the area – usually national parks (e.g. St. Paul Subterranean National Park in Puerto Princesa, Palawan).
8. The native or tribal traditions of the people in the destinations are almost untouched by modern influences (e.g. T’boli in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato). However, this is very delicate on the part of the locals since sudden foreign intrusion into their lives may bring about culture shock and sudden change in lifestyle.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 5 & 6.

9. For marine environment, the area must be diverse in marine life. Endemicity also greatly determines the inclusion of the area for ecotourism destination (e.g. El Nido Marine Park in northern Palawan).

**C. Key Ecotourism Sites as of January 10, 2003, as Furnished by the Conservation Research Mapping and Systems Development (CRMSD), DOT**

The following sites are identified as Key Ecotourism Sites in the Philippines:

**Northern Luzon**

1. Batanes
2. Vigan
3. Peñablanca
4. Cordillera Rice Terraces
5. Hundred Islands
6. Mt. Pinatubo

**Southern Luzon**

7. Wawa Dam
8. Mt. Makiling
9. Tagaytay/Taal Volcano
10. Mt. Isarog
11. Mayon Volcano
12. Donsol
13. Bulusan Volcano
14. Apo Reef
15. Mt. Guiting-Guiting
16. El Nido
17. Puerto Princesa Underground River
18. Tubbataha Reef

**Visayas**

19. Sohaton Caves
20. Lake Danao
21. Mt. Kanlaon
22. Olango Island
23. Bohol
24. Tabon Strait
25. Apo Island

## **Mindanao**

26. Siargao
27. Camiguin Island
28. Agusan Marsh
29. Misamis Oriental
30. Dipolog
31. Mt. Apo
32. Lake Sebu

### **D. Processess Involved in the Development of Ecotourism Destinations<sup>17</sup>**

1. Audit of the features which may make the destination attractive (e.g. number and species of birds for bird-watching in Olango Island, Cebu and species that are peculiar to Palawan).
2. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prior to physical or infrastructure development. This is standard procedure for the development of potential tourist spots, which identifies the positive and negative factors of development, and proposes measures that would reduce the negative impacts.
3. Plans should conform to the Development Standards and Guidelines for Physical Infrastructure Development. Development of the area should conform to the principles of ecotourism – i.e. must have minimum impact, the structures shall blend with the environment, the facilities blend with the native culture, the “carrying capacity” of the destination should be determined – i.e. the maximum number of visitors guaranteed to enjoy the destination with minimum impact to the environment.
4. Consultation with the affected community and their acceptance of the project is a must prior to any development.
5. Training or tapping of technical guides who will also serve as the resource persons of the participants, foremost of which are naturalists.
6. Regular environment audit of the destination (e.g. water quality, aesthetics, sewage, etc.).

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

#### **IV. HOUSE BILLS ESTABLISHING NATURAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS FILED DURING THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

1. H.B. No. 5493 - “An Act Establishing the Coastal Environment Program, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes”.
  - NEREUS O. ACOSTA
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
2. H.B. No. 5047 - “An Act Creating the National Environmental Management Authority, Defining its Powers, Functions and Responsibilities, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes”.
  - NEREUS O. ACOSTA
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
3. H.B. No. 5035 - “An Act Creating the National Environmental Management Authority, Defining its Powers, Functions and Responsibilities, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes”.
  - NEREUS O. ACOSTA
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
4. H.B. No. 4943 - “An Act Establishing Mount Apo Located in the Municipalities of Magpet and Makilala and City of Kidapawan, Province of Cotabato, in the Municipalities of Bansalan and Sta. Cruz and City of Digos, Province of Davao del Sur, and in the City of Davao, as a Protected Area Under the Category of Natural Park and its Peripheral Areas as Buffer Zones, Providing for its Management, and for Other Purposes.”
  - GREGORIO T. IPONG
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
5. H.B. No. 4920 - “An Act Declaring Certain Parcels of Land of the Public Domain, Covering the Subic Watershed Forest Reserve as a Protected Area Under the Category of Natural Park”.
  - JAMES L. GORDON, JR.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

6. H.B. No. 4848 – “An Act to Establish Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park Located in Sibuyan Island, Province of Romblon as a Natural Park and its Surrounding Areas as Buffer Zones and for Other Purposes Pursuant to Republic Act No. 7586”.
  - PERPETUO B. YLAGAN
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
7. H.B. No. 4781 – “An Act Declaring Certain Parcels of Land of the Public Domain Covering the Bataan Natural Park and the Subic Watershed Forest Reserve Situated in the Municipalities of Hermosa, Orani, Samal, Abucay, Bagac and Morong in the Province of Bataan and a Portion of the Subic Bay Special Economic Zone Within the Island of Luzon as a Protected Area Under the Category of Natural Park”.
  - ANTONIO P. ROMAN
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
8. H.B. No. 4313 – “An Act Establishing the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park in Palawan as a Protected Area Under the Category of Natural Park”.
  - JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
9. H.B. No. 4249 – “An Act Creating the Department of Environmental Protection and Sanitation, Integrating the Different Government Agencies Related to Environmental Protection and Sanitation”.
  - MAURICIO G. DOMOGAN
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
10. H.B. No. 1696 – “An Act Establishing the Apo Reef in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, as a Protected Area Under the Classification of Natural Park and its Peripheral Waters”.
  - JOSEPHINE V. RAMIREZ-SATO
  - 1<sup>ST</sup> Reading

11. H.B. No. 1355 – “An Act Increasing the Penalty for the Killing, Wounding or Taking Away of the Eagle and/or Destroying, Disbursing or Taking Away of the Bird’s Nests or Eggs, Amending for the Purpose Section Five of Republic Act Numbered Sixty-One Hundred and Forty-Seven”.
  - PROSPERO A. PICHAY, JR.
  - First Reading
  
12. H.B. No. 1144 – “An Act Establishing for Each Region a Five (5) Hectare Arboretum, Declaring it as Protected Areas for Ecological Preservation, Allocating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes”.
  - ROSELLER L. BARINAGA
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
13. H.B. No. 974 – “An Act Providing for the Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Resources and their Habitats, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes”.
  - CYNTHIA A. VILLAR
  - 1<sup>ST</sup> Reading
  
14. H.B. No. 739 – “An Act Creating the Office of Environmental Education, Defining its Functions and Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes”.
  - CYNTHIA A. VILLAR
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
  
15. H.B. No. 476 – “An Act Providing for the Creation of Multi-Sectoral Environmental Protection Council in Every Municipality in the Province of Aurora and Appropriating Funds Therefor”.
  - BELLAFLOR J. ANGARA-CASTILLO
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

16. H.B. No. 234 – “An Act Empowering the Local Government Units (LGUs) to Monitor the Enforcement of Laws, Rules and Regulations on Environmental Protection and Conservation of Natural Resources”.
- JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY: PALAWAN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLAN

RRB/LRS  
RHAB/MJMV/VTM/GRB/amt/mti  
1.22.03