



Agricultural Wetlands as a Showcase of Wetland Conservation **Empowering Communities for Managing Agricultural Wetlands**

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About the Wetlands of Candaba

- **Candaba Wetlands** is considered as a Key Biodiversity Area (#31). It is a significant area for agricultural and fisheries production, water for irrigation, natural runoff retention, and an extremely important staging and wintering area for migratory birds, being part of the EAAF.
- The project area (**Paligui Wetland**) is a 135-hectare riceland owned and managed by Macagatal Irrigators Association (MIA). The primary land use of the site is agricultural and is identified as a strategic integrated crop and fishery sub-development zone.
- Rice is the primary crop in this farmland but only one cropping can be done in a year because the area is submerged during rainy season and turns it into a fishpond.



Dry Season (November to April)



Wet Season (May to October)

About the Wetlands of Candaba



- Candaba wetlands continues to be drained or converted to wet agriculture severely limiting habitat for waterfowls.
- Conversion into fishponds causing vegetation cover to be patchy.
- Siltation is also apparent.
- Mostly privately owned with very small part that is state-owned but has been classified as “alienable and disposable” land thus posing a peculiar concern for conservation.
- Because of declining yield in agriculture, farmers are forced to sell their land
- Lately, these wetlands are being filled to give way to real estate development, ie housing subdivisions, economic zones, etc.
- During initial interviews, it was learned that farmers consider migratory birds as pests and were indifferent to the idea of protecting them.



What we wanted to achieve

To conserve Candaba Wetlands:

- increasing awareness and capacity of local stakeholders,
- Characterizing/assessing the wetland
- developing a management plan.



Dry Season (November to April)



Wet Season (May to October)

Engaging the Local Community



Community Meetings with the Macagatal Irrigators Association and the Barangay Officials to organize community engagement



Conduct of CEPA activities (wetland walk, learning events, workshops, World Wetlands Day celebration)

Engaging the Local Community



Bird Watching Guides training conducted by the Department of Tourism (DOT) for seven (7) days ;



Training on rice production conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) – Region 3 of the Department of Agriculture with Training Needs Assessment

Engaging the Local Community



- Site characterization and assessment activity (Rapid ecological, socio-cultural, and economic assessments) for dry and wet seasons.
- A management plan was developed employing participatory methods and focusing on increasing the capacity of farmers to manage their farm resources.





Main stakeholders/ target groups involved in the project

- Macagatal Irrigators Association (MIA) (group of farmers; 70 members)
- Local Government Unit of Candaba, Pampanga
Barangay Local Government Unit (LGU) of Paligui, Candaba Pampanga
- Academe (Pampanga State Agricultural Univ)
- Other Civil Society Organizations in the area (i.e women's organization, youth)

Measuring Success

- Number of farmers reached by CEPA
- Number of organizations and government agencies that agreed to cooperate and partner with the SCPW on the project
- Number of trainings conducted
- Agreement to conserve portion of the Candaba Wetlands (MIA property)
- Management Plan prepared and endorsed





Biggest challenge in achieving success

Biggest challenge was to build trust and maintain interest of local communities in conservation work which we hurdled successfully.

After that, it was lack of funds to operationalize their eco-tour activity in the management plan i.e binoculars/spotting scope



Sustainability after the completion

Since project completion in 2019, full implementation of planned activities in the management plan had been put on hold especially at the onset of the pandemic. However, funds have been approved for its implementation to start in July 2022.

World Wetlands Day 2019 with the Media at the Wetlands of Candaba



With the theme “Wetland and Climate Change”, a Media Wetland Exposure activity was conducted on 1-2 February 2019 in Candaba, Pampanga. The event was participated by 24 individuals coming from local and national media

Day 1: Learning session
Day 2: Birding activity and Wetland Walk,



World Wetlands Day 2020

Wetlands and Agricultural Biodiversity: A Learning Event
06 February 2020

The event aimed to instill awareness among key stakeholders including farmers; faculties, staff and students of PSAU; and other members of the community, on the importance of the various ecosystem services provided by wetlands and its biodiversity.

World Wetlands Day 2020

It also mobilized citizen science through **Wetlands Bioblitz** using the toolkit that the SCPW developed.

The participants composed of community leaders and other stakeholders took part in the characterization of the Paligui wetlands through Wetlands BioBlitz. Other activities during the afternoon field exposure at the Paligui Wetlands were wetland walk and birdwatching activity, where the participants experienced and learned about this particular ecosystem and appreciate nature amidst a farm setting.



Sneak preview of the Paligui Wetland Center

The event was highlighted by the launch of the design of the proposed Paligui Wetland Centre.

Some funds for initial implementation have been secured through the SCPW partner, Global Nature Fund to start in August 2022.



Thank you

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