



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Lands and Natural Resources
Division of Agriculture – CNMI Forestry



CNMI's Forest Action Plan
Update
2015-2020

STATEWIDE RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The CNMI Statewide Assessment was conducted in accordance to the documents and data provided by the councils and agencies that manages or have interest in protecting the islands Natural Resources. Most of its priorities are set for conservation, protection and enhancement of our limited and unique landscape. The trailing statistics encompasses the entire 14 islands as a whole, but will focuses on the three major islands (Saipan, Rota and Tinian). These three islands deal with unique challenges due to the competing land uses for developments and other economic benefits. Available land now becomes targets for these demands annually.

CNMI- FORESTRY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Forestry is to promote best land management practice while sustaining a healthy diversity and productivity on our limited and fragile forest and grassland resources for present and future generation. Its mission will be carried out through conservation, protection and the enhancement practices, while keeping the islands present landscape provisions in the process.

- Conserve and Manage Working Forest Landscapes for Multiple Values and Uses
 - One of the most the importance in conserving CNMI's Working forest is the ability for other agencies to see the need to retain and protect its ecosystem through conservation and enhancement effort. Badlands were being converted into soil and water retention. This is done through the use of interplanting more deeper rooted trees and plants, develop water basin, terrace planting, and other applicable methods approved by Forestry (DLNR-Forestry), Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ), Mariana Island Nature Alliance (NGO).



- Protect Forests from Threats
 - Since the development of the Forest Action Plan, Point of Entry has been supported by the Forestry Program to recognize the importance of both nuisance and or detrimental species from entering our borders. Traps were set throughout point of entries – targeting Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*) and Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*). This is an effort established through an MOA between Guam - University of Guam, Northern Mariana College – Cooperative Extension and Educational Services – Department of Lands and Natural Resources – Division of Agriculture.
 - Through the Forest Action Plan, a team was created and Advisory Council to address invasive issues among others to address the islands fragile landscape. This includes the protection, conservation and enhancement of CNMI's Forest Landscapes. Representative from the Environmental group, NGO (Mariana Islands Nature Alliance) and Dept. Representatives.



Oryctes rhinoceros



Wasmannia auropunctata



Boiga irregularis



Coccinia grandis



Advisory Council

- Enhance Public Benefits from Trees and Forests
 - Urban setting continues to build and expand permanent structure such as buildings and major pathways. However, with the value of Green-Space and uses, enable these developers to consider the importance of having and incorporating spaces within the established concrete jungle. Meetings were held to discuss cultural valued trees, shrubs and landmarks.



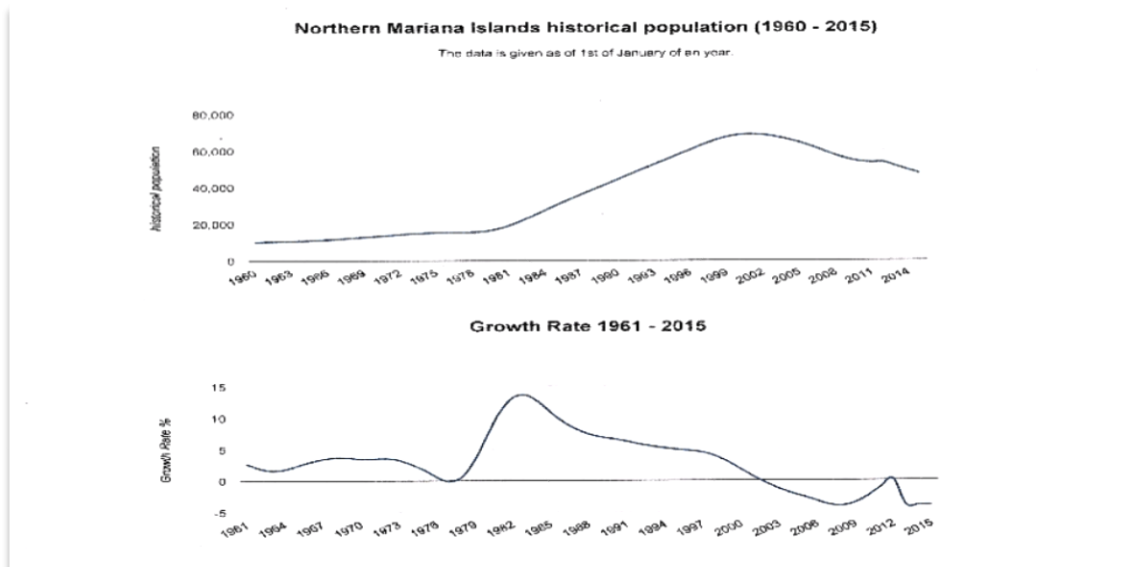
Urban Beautification project “Enhancing the publics benefits from Trees and Forests”

The long-term strategy is to ensure that the programs continue to fulfill its mandated obligations throughout its funded year. However, changes includes: Population decrease, Economic Development, Forest Legacy and partnership composition. Another update will be undertaking when National Priorities change before 2020. However, considering that no major changes in directions and theme for 2016-2020, the CNMI’s Forest Action Plan will be updated and distributed to all land-managers as resource and a copy will be uploaded unto the CNMI Forestry Web-Page (cnmiforestry.com). This is a working document – subject to changes and modification to meet current condition.

Population:

Northern Mariana Islands population 2015 ([http://countrymeters.info/en/Northern Mariana Islands](http://countrymeters.info/en/Northern_Mariana_Islands))

During 2015 Northern Mariana Islands population is estimated to be decreased by -1 889 people and reach 45 265 in the beginning of 2016. The natural increase is expected to be positive, as the number of births will exceed the number of deaths by 821. If external migration will remain on the previous year level, the population will be declined by 2 709 due to the migration reasons. It means that amount of people who leaves Northern Mariana Islands to settle permanently in another country (emigrants) will prevail over the amount of people who moves into the country (to which they are not native) in order to settle there as permanent residents (immigrants).



Economy

Main article: [Economy of the Northern Mariana Islands](#)



(www.lonelyplanet.com)

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands benefits from substantial subsidies and development assistance from the federal government of the United States. The economy also relies heavily on tourism, especially from the Asian countries (Japan, China and Korea). The tourism industry has also been under great pressure from the limited resources ranging from unreliable flights to lodging availability. Additional burden are the current Asian economy standpoint.

Northern Mariana Islands had successfully used its position as a free trade area with the U.S., and most recently subjected to the same labor laws. The US Immigration System was established, and the minimum federal wage of \$6.55/hour took effect, but this changes were sought to occur gradually because the sudden increase will definitely impaired small businesses' and its capability to meet costs.

Agricultural production, primarily root crops, cattle, coconuts, breadfruit, and short term crops such as tomatoes, and melons exists but is relatively diminutive in the economy at this time. However, local farmers and ranchers are pursuing to promote local produce through the newly established Farmers Market and through legislation for further support by the government and businesses'.

Action Taken (Forest Legacy Program applied: 2013 – 2014 – approved to establish the program ... AON is needed to continue its implementation.)

Stakeholder consultation: Lead Agency for the Forest Legacy Program. (SWARS page 33)

The projected program is specifically created to improve conservation effort in the Northern Mariana Islands through Forestry Legacy Program approach. This program was applied for in 2013-2014 and was awarded with its first funds. However, the required AON is still in a draft form, pending the employment of a coordinator whom will be completing needed aspects of the programs requirements and the review from the Forest Service – Region 5.

The Coordinator will be employed through state processing and the approval of the US Forest Service as stipulated in under the terms of the grant award requires prior, written approval from the Forest Service (Provision O in the original grant award). The AON is and will be drafted once the coordinator is on board.

Limestone Forest and its pristine Ecosystem



Long-term strategy: Forest Legacy will be implemented to secure land areas of importance through the process of “Land-acquisition” for conservation only. A Coordinator will be hired on a full time status, to ensure that the program continues indefinitely.



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