

“REVIEW OF STATE FOREST ACTION PLAN”
Republic of the Marshall Islands
November 2015

The State Forester of the Marshall Islands, the Secretary of Resources & Development, and other R&D staff “checked in” with U.S. Forest Service (FS) staff during a Region 5/Marshall Islands Cooperative Forestry Assistance review in March 2015, and through subsequent email and telephone calls. The following summary was prepared by R5 Cooperative Forester Katie Friday.

- Implementation highlights from the past five years of the Forest Action Plan (FAP, also known as the Statewide Assessment and Resource Strategy or SWARS) were organized by the “Conserve, Protect and Enhance” national priorities and summarized in the attached “National Priorities Section” completed by the State Forester.
- Implementation challenges encountered over the past five years have included limited staff capacity (as described in the Forest Action Plan’s crosscutting consideration, “capacity-building”), and lack of capacity for fiscal management of grants made directly to the National Government. The latter problem is starting to be addressed by awarding grants to the College of the Marshall Islands for cooperative implementation with the Ministry of Resources & Development, and providing technical assistance in addition to grants, for example with Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle monitoring, and climate change adaptation.
- The primary implementation focus for the next five years will be Food Security, now shown as Issue B “Food security and sustainable livelihoods” in the Forest Action Plan, especially using the strategies already shown in the Forest Action Plan (“rejuvenate traditional crops” and “coconut rehabilitation and replantation”). This issue will be addressed within the context of climate change (already shown as a crosscutting consideration in the Forest Action Plan), using the Reimaanlok process for community outreach (multi-agency and interdisciplinary); the Forest Action Plan refers to the Reimaanlok process not only under the “Biodiversity” issue, but also in the “Food Security” strategies.
- Data needs that have come up since the FAP was completed in 2010 include location and extent of senescent coconut plantations, and condition of the coastal forest. However the FAP as currently written includes many data needs that are still outstanding.
- Formal and informal “check-ins” have taken place with stakeholders, especially members of the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee (Coastal Management Advisory Committee or CMAC) regarding plan implementation at the CMAC meetings in July and October, and with the College of the Marshall Islands during preparation of the collaborative FY15 and FY16 grant proposals.
- Opportunities for Forest Service technical assistance include GIS mapping; nursery training; expertise in entomology, pathology and detection and management of invasive species.
- An update of the Forest Action Plan must be made no later than 2020, but an earlier update may be made in conjunction with the Ministry’s efforts to compile its existing plans and update the Ministry’s Strategic Action Plan. The Forest Service could provide technical and financial assistance for this effort. The updated Forest Action Plan could incorporate the Ministry’s food security policy.