

**BUILDING ON THE PAST, UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT, AND
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: SHARED INSIGHTS FROM PARTIES**

As with many natural resource management projects, understanding the issues, developing successful strategies, addressing challenges, and other key elements moving projects forward can only be achieved through evolution of the project itself. Providing an opportunity for reflection allows projects to build upon the lessons they have learned as well as assess the current state of affairs to advise future activities and strategies. Such reflections also provide a learning vehicle for other projects facing similar challenges and issues on which to draw as a strategic resource. This chapter will focus on gaining such insights into watershed management on Pohnpei by focusing on three segments: 1) building on the past; 2) understanding the present; and 3) planning for the future.

In *building on the past*, key observations and lessons learned based on past accomplishments were examined. The observations and lessons were:

- Approaches are varied and both top-down and bottom-up;
- Build on existing foundations;
- Recognize how people learn in a way that has meaning to them and fosters their ownership and commitment; and
- Assess strategies, activities, incentives, and motives.

In *understanding the present*, current challenges facing the program were identified as:

- Generating resources (both financial and human);
- Political leadership and conflicts of interest;
- Controlling destructive activities; and
- Mitigating outside influences on traditional lifestyles.

In *planning for the future*, steps to be taken in the next five years for watershed management on the island were seen as:

- Laying down the Watershed Forest Reserve boundary line;
- Enforcement; and
- Increasing education activities and outreach.

The conclusions in each section (as well as in Chapter Four which continues similar analysis of successes and challenges from an organizational perspective) are drawn from interviews and reflect participant perspectives at differing levels of involvement and support, from state agencies to non-profits, from traditional leaders to village members, from municipal governments to sakau farmers.⁴⁴ As presented in Figure 6, 38 individuals were interviewed for this case study analysis, representing seven categories of involved groups and parties.⁴⁵

Figure 6. Breakdown of stakeholder groups and representative numbers interviewed

Stakeholder Groups	Total Interviewed
Community Members (including sakau farmers)	7
Municipal Governments	5
Non-governmental Organizations	5
Elected Officials (Politicians)	6
State Agencies	6
Traditional Leaders	5
U.S. Federal Agencies	4

Building on the Past: Key Observations and Accomplishments

Participants were asked several questions concerning accomplishments or changes seen as a result of watershed management activities, elements that made such accomplishments possible, things that did not work and why, aspects that could have

⁴⁴ Throughout this chapter, *parties* will be used interchangeably with *stakeholders* and *groups*. *Project* and *program* will also be used similarly.

⁴⁵ The key observations noted in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Four, focus only on those answers derived from responses most frequently cited across all seven categories of respondents.

been done differently, and how past challenges were overcome.⁴⁶ The responses provided an opportunity to reflect on what has been accomplished and what has been learned as a result. The four main observations discussed here are: 1) approaches are varied and both top-down and bottom-up; 2) build on existing foundations (e.g. processes and institutions); 3) recognize how people learn in a way that has meaning to them and fosters their ownership and commitment; and 4) assess strategies, activities, incentives, and motives. Where appropriate, these observations are linked to major accomplishments resulting from watershed management activities. These accomplishments highlight how these key observations are applied. Specifically, these accomplishments are recognition (even by non-supporters) that without the watershed program, watershed areas on the island would be destroyed; the Grow Low Campaign; gaining community support for watershed management activities; increased awareness of threats and issues; and development of innovative strategies through experimental approaches.⁴⁷ The following observations also provide useful insights informing current activities and other projects facing similar issues and challenges.

Approaches are varied and both top-down and bottom-up. Watershed management on Pohnpei has gone through periods of both top-down (e.g. 1987 law) as well as bottom-up approaches (e.g. 1996 shift to communities). However, participants

⁴⁶ A complete set of the interview questions is provided in Appendix D.

⁴⁷ Though not cited as frequently among the range of participants interviewed, interviewees noted other successes as including increased awareness of the 1987 laws and its necessary regulations, the formation of the PRMC, support of state legislators, getting the state to be held accountable to communities, increased coordination among all partners, successfully laying the Watershed Forest Reserve line down in U and Madolenihmw, developing alternative activities such as sponge farms and sakau nurseries, creation of reserves, development of a sakau clearing monitoring program, move by the state from a top-down approach to a more inclusive approach, development of an environmental education program, return of birds and streams as well as increased water quality, shift of conservation legislation to recognize and include traditional processes and grassroots efforts, and communities developing plans.

have come to realize that neither approach works without the involvement and support of parties both approaches bring together. When the state used a purely legislative and regulatory approach, its work was halted by angry villagers. When TNC moved to a purely community-based approach, it realized that without the political support of the state legitimizing and holding accountable activities (as well as providing resources), communities alone would be unsuccessful managing watershed areas. As stated by one individual, “without political will, without the top people, if government doesn’t believe in resource management, we will all be struggling.” As a result, the current approach to watershed management is a balance of both bottom-up as well as top-down approaches in which communities and the state (as well as municipal governments) work together to develop solutions to watershed management. As one individual noted, “[we] need to communicate clearly guidelines between traditional chiefs and state roles and responsibilities for watershed management. By law, state yes; by culture, it’s the chiefs. Consensus is the main key.”

A mix of strategies and activities has also proven useful in achieving progress. This mix has resulted from the experimental approach adopted by the program in which effectiveness is achieved through a philosophy of, as one person put it, “learning by doing and by mistakes.” The completion of the Watershed Forest Reserve boundary line in U and half of Madolenihmw mirrors this observation. Achievement of this objective was accomplished by lobbying state legislators, gaining support of the lieutenant governor (a key decision maker on the PRMC who could make the budget request to the state), working directly with the many organizations in each municipality (e.g. traditional leaders, church leaders, municipal leaders) through a community visioning process, and

education activities to promote awareness on issues and create community support. As one interviewee noted, “you have to feel them out in every municipality, your approach will be different each time... [there is] no single approach for this program...no one strategy to fix everything.”

Part of this mix of approaches and strategies has led to one of the successes of the program: development of innovative strategies (through experimental approaches) to address watershed management issues and challenges. Examples of innovative strategies are the poster, education workshops, and lowland sakau program. In particular, the work done with municipal governments in drafting co-management legislation and agreements as a way to address the challenge of the state’s unwillingness to formally adopt co-management strategies is a good example. By working with the municipal governments, the watershed program is setting a precedent for co-management thereby laying the ground work for a blueprint that can be adopted by the state in the future. In working with the municipal governments, models of co-management can be tested from which the state can learn and hopefully adopt in the future.

Build on existing foundations. Learning to work within institutions and processes that already exist versus trying to create new ones was a lesson learned early on in the program when attempts to create local management committees were tried. These committees eventually fell apart because they did not have the support of the Nahnkens (who saw these committees as competing institutions for power) and were a new entity that no one in the villages had any experience with (thereby hindering effectiveness). In addition, the legitimacy of these committees (both with traditional leaders as well as the state) to manage watershed areas, particularly regarding enforcement, was never

established. Another lesson resulting from these experiences was learning where the key-decision makers within traditional systems and communities lay to move watershed management forward. As one traditional leader noted, “regarding support, it’s not a matter of what’s on paper, but it’s a matter of who supports it, who says what.” This lesson was reflected when the CAPs moved from the kousapw to the wehi levels, involving Nahnmwarkis. A different example of new institutions competing with already established institutions and creating problems is a situation that occurred in Nett municipality. In Nett, the municipal office had already created its own resource management committee that led to competition with the local management committees created by TNC. This caused confusion among villagers in Nett and slowed the progress of watershed management in this municipality.

Recognize how people learn in a way that has meaning to them and fosters their ownership and commitment. Prior to the PRA workshops, both the state and NGOs tried to convince communities to address environmental concerns identified by the WSC. However, through the PRA workshops, the state and NGOs learned that environmental issues were less likely to be adopted unless communities themselves recognized them and could be linked to daily lives. In other words, environmental issues were less pressing for communities when they were dealing with fundamental concerns such as health, education, and livelihoods. When communities were given the chance to express their own concerns and explore ways to address these, issues of natural resource management were apt to be more effectively addressed as linkages were made (e.g. moving pig pens from streams would improve water quality as well as prevent health problems). As Bill Raynor of The Nature Conservancy noted at the 17th annual Pacific Islands Conference,

“people-centered development...involves improving the quality of people’s lives through improving their ability to participate” (Raynor 1998, 138). Another put it in the following way, “[watershed management] it’s about peoples’ relationships...let them tell me what the problems are. [It’s] a two-way street.”

This observation can be seen in the Grow Low campaign, a major accomplishment of the watershed management program. A program promoting sakau cultivation in lowland areas, the Grow Low program provides villages with nursery grown sakau to plant near houses and areas closer to communities (as opposed to upland forests) and was cited most often by those interviewed as a critical success of the watershed management program, “you seldom see sakau around houses in the past, but now can see sakau near houses and is a result of education.” The success of this program, similar to the aerial photography poster, trip to the Philippines, and natural disasters, can be attributed to both first-hand observation and experience as well as key leaders also adopting the practice. As one individual noted, “that is the Pohnpeian way, seeing is believing.”

Initially, due to the success of sakau cultivation in the uplands, people were skeptical that it could be grown in the lowland areas. However, this program, demonstrated to people in communities that sakau could be grown just as successfully in the lowlands. They could see it with their own eyes either through their own experiences or that of a neighbor’s, “lowland sakau, more people believe it can work. In the beginning questioned it, but once see it in a village people want to do it, people drinking lowland sakau now at funerals...people choose the lowland sakau because it is stronger and older.” In addition, the fact that key leaders within the community had also planted

sakau near their houses also proved critical in spreading the practice and gaining support.⁴⁸ Indeed, as one traditional leader explained, “changes are clear now, cooperating, working in lowlands, easy for them to work...when some people ask why so many sakau, he asks, you didn’t get the education program? Ask why these things growing better, his answer, because of the watershed program.”

Related to this success, other behavior changes were also noted as accomplishments. They include: decreased clearings of upland forests for sakau; removal of pig pens near rivers and streams; the relocation of latrines near rivers and streams; anti-littering in villages, rivers and streams; and increased discussion of watershed management within communities.

Recognizing how people learn in a way that has meaning to them and fosters their ownership and commitment has also led to another major success of the program - gaining community support for watershed activities. The engagement of the communities through the education workshops, PRAs, and development of CAPs led to increased support by communities of watershed management activities. Several people, including state agencies, community organizers, and traditional leaders, noted the following regarding this change in support, “people think this project is a land grab...they learn project is for them, not government,” “during Trust Territory days, government takes away from people everything. Now, people feel differently...people didn’t like the

⁴⁸ Examples prompting conservation behaviors is termed “Modeling” in the field of environmental stewardship psychology. It has been shown that modeling a behavior is an effective way, surpassing education in the form of information sharing or signage, to promulgate in others the behavior. Modeling, particularly when it is done by a key individual within a community or group, sets a social norm and allows others to overcome barriers, such as unfamiliarity, doubts, or fears, concerning the behavior (Ester 1981-2, 212). The other aspect of this program’s success also has a practical side. Growing sakau in the lowlands means that the elderly, women, and children can also participate since its production in the upland forests is relegated to young men whose strength is necessary to harvest the plants as long hikes over difficult terrain is required.

watershed law, they don't feel that way now, they support where the line is. People more willing to listen to the government," "before people are against law, people now understanding we need to set aside land for watershed." More importantly, it led to a reawakening of communities' abilities to take responsibilities for their own futures by organizing themselves and developing the capacity to address issues and problems, instead of relying on the state to do so (this dependent attitude was fostered through many years under colonial rule as well as Trust Territory control). As a community member noted, "[watershed activities] really gave the people education and awareness of the programs. Getting people together to make plan together, not just one person makes the plan." With regard to the PRAs and CAPs specifically, one person stated, "it's taught communities how to be involved. There can be a process of getting involved, they can provide input, and their input is valuable, needed to move forward. Move them away from complacency." This opinion was echoed by a traditional leader as well when he shared, "when they [communities] make objectives, they become realistic, it works, they implement it." An example of this self-organizing is the visioning conference held in U. As a person closely involved with the conference noted, "the marine life, they put sanctuaries, they see fish returning, one of the elements of the visioning, put down a plan, all the people in U know they should respect the land."

The other aspect to recognizing how people learn in a way that has meaning to them and fosters their ownership and commitment is the realization of the important role human relations play. Like many other natural resource management projects dealing on an ecosystem level and involving multiple parties, the people involved with watershed management on Pohnpei have come to realize that though the issues are ecological, the

approaches to developing solutions come down to human relations. Watershed management means managing both the resources and people. Whether dealing with traditional leaders, villagers, state agents, municipal agents, or NGO representatives, developing relationships through understanding and respecting the views of people is a key factor for moving forward. As one individual phrased it, “[Watershed management is about] human relations, really getting to know them. It’s not nature, it’s people damaging nature. You have to get to know them better.”

As a result of working with communities and developing relationships, a major outcome has been increased awareness of the threats and issues facing watershed areas throughout the entire island and recognition (even by non-supporters) that without the watershed program, watershed areas on the island would be destroyed. Whether in Kolonia, the capital of Pohnpei, or in villages, people are familiar with the watershed – both its ecological as well as social importance and the activities conducted by various organizations to improve management of these areas.⁴⁹ As one woman interviewed in a community noted, “[after] the education program came, I learned nature of upland is related to sea... I didn’t know that clearing forest damages the water... [Now] destroy sea and it’s hard to fish. I tell my kids not to destroy forest, kill birds, and not to trash things.” Another person stated, “everybody needs waters...if forest is destroyed we will have no waters.” This awareness also translates into the willingness to discuss in

⁴⁹ These comments seemed to support the researcher’s own experiences during her three month stay on the island. Given the small population and size of the island, people on Pohnpei are very friendly as well as curious to new comers. As such, I was often invited to meals at people’s houses or casually stopped on the street and asked the purpose of my visit. I would simply state my purpose as “studying the watershed” to avoid leading responses by people. During such exchanges with people in both Kolonia and in villages, people not directly related to the program would share their views on the watershed, often citing its importance and need for conservation.

communities issues concerning proper management and the need for change, “we are getting a larger percentage of people to agree that there needs to be changes.”

Assess strategies, activities, incentives, and motives. Sixteen years of experience suggests a need for more deliberate assessment of strategies and activities. Many of the approaches tried throughout the last sixteen years have led to development of effective strategies. But sixteen years have passed also because some strategies (e.g. kousapw level resource management committees, compensation, capacity development) proved to be unfeasible or led to backtracking of activities. These effects could have been avoided by spending more time assessing the particular approach and effectiveness of a strategy before its implementation. Activities to monitor the strategy would also have proven useful in alerting people to the effectiveness of a strategy. In particular, many of the challenges of watershed management seem to revolve around understanding the parties involved. As such, more time should be given to better understand who the key decision-makers are, what incentives they have to pursue different strategies, their motives for involvement and support, what influences parties, and how parties can be held accountable for their actions. Such an assessment would have proven useful when a village in Kitti and its CCOs began veering away from implementing their CAPs and creating distrust in other villages about the WSC and its work. Such assessments could also efficiently focus resources and the time participating parties spend on developing effective approaches.

Part of assessing strategies and activities is to also insure that institutions, processes, and activities are accountable and have legitimacy. Many of the attempts to develop local and municipal level resource management committees as well as

Community Action Plan implementations were less than effective because of accountability and legitimacy issues. Though Asian Development Bank consultants had conducted a legal analysis exploring the viability of community co-management within existing state laws, the fact remains that the state has yet to legitimize (through adoption of the 1995 revised rules and regulations) co-management with communities. As a result, attempts to involve communities in watershed management have been slow and in some areas unfeasible. Additionally, when local management has been tried, the absence of such laws (which are also mechanisms to insure accountability of activities and individuals, a concern by the state regarding devolving management to communities) have hindered community activities toward watershed management.

In addition, recognizing incentives associated with different methods for encouraging participation is critical. In the beginning of the program, participants were provided financial compensation to help with attending watershed activities (e.g. transportation costs), organizing education workshops and resource management committees, conducting CAPs, and working as Community Conservation Officers. However, these financial compensations attracted people who were more interested in the compensation than watershed management and improving their communities. As one person explicitly stated, “their participation was really to get this stipend.” This affected the quality of participation both in terms of level of representation and input as well as effectiveness of the activities. Indeed, this concern was reflected early on in WSC meeting minutes concerning the education workshops that had been held in Kitti:

He [community organizer] was disappointed overall in the low turnout of villagers at meetings. [He] felt the per diem (*isais*) we [WSC] gave the chiefs was more a reason for them attending the meetings than the desire to learn and do something about the watershed and mangrove. The paid people were there, but

those not paid tended not to come. He also stated that he had doubts about whether the Soumas would or could explain the watershed situation to their people that did not come to the meetings. (WSC meeting minutes, 3/9/93).⁵⁰

As a result, when the financial compensations were rescinded, many ceased their involvement or remained only peripherally involved to the point of becoming unreliable, thereby affecting the momentum and continuation of watershed activities. As one community organizer put it, “[it’s] hard to get them to work without paying. They [community members] don’t realize they are doing the work for their own benefits.”

Understanding the Present: Current Challenges

As evidenced in Chapter Two, watershed management on Pohnpei has experienced and overcome several challenges in order to reach the point it has today. As with any natural resource management situation, challenges continue to evolve and the program evolves to meet the new issues progress brings. When participants were asked what they felt were the most critical challenges facing watershed management today, responses generally fell into the following categories (in order of most frequently cited by largest range of parties): finding resources (namely funding), addressing political leadership and conflict of interest issues, stopping destruction of resources, and mitigating outside influences on the traditional Pohnpeian way of life.⁵¹

Generating resources. With most of the state (and therefore DoF’s budget) tied to decreasing Compact funding, generating resources to adequately protect and manage

⁵⁰ This quote also highlights issues concerning capacity as well as credible representation of communities by traditional leaders. These issues are further explored in Chapter Four.

⁵¹ The question of future challenges was also posed to participants. However, upon analyzing responses, answers revealed that current and future challenges were often seen as the same by respondents as answers overlapped or were repeated. As such, this section should be viewed by readers as including both current and future challenges.

watershed areas on Pohnpei is a large challenge. Most of the activities to date have been funded by donor agencies such as the ADB and GEF (and to a lesser extent, the U.S. Forest Service). As such, finding adequate funding, particularly long-term dedicated funding, to continue watershed management activities was cited by most parties as the number one challenge for the program. The effects of funding hindering activities centered on hiring of personnel and equipment for enforcement and monitoring as well as other activities. The lack of resources was particularly tied to hindering work with communities, chiefly with developing alternative incomes to sakau farming and the need for more education. Such concerns were voiced by several in the state government, “forestry not capable of doing the job, we don’t have enough material to work within the community. Not enough people and finances, not enough,” “when develop community organizations they need constant support, if let support go, they pass, we don’t have the resources though to do this,” “community has to be involved...communities ask to be joining enforcement, that’s the way to do it. State has no money,” “planned to give them [CCOs] uniforms and simple survey and chart, providing them with tools and uniforms, no funding or money.”

Political leadership and conflicts of interest. With regard to the state, issues concerning conflicts of interest and legitimacy of the state to manage watershed areas are foremost challenges. Within the state legislature, conflicts of interest are evident in natural resource management as some senators, who sit on natural resource committees, also own construction and dredging companies, hotels, and commercial markets. As one U.S. federal agency representative noted, “[you have to] realize the politics, senators in the business of exporting mangrove crabs, yet being on natural resource committees

making the rules, conflict of interest, this undermined our efforts.” Another said, “government is always going to be a challenge...corruption, lack of attracting competent people to positions...political influence on management decisions.” Indeed, these business ventures have direct impact on watershed activities as the state legislature makes decisions on development activities and the funding allocated to them. The building of roads in particular for construction activities or in response to constituent requests and industry interests is of particular concern because roads lead to greater and easier access to upland forest areas, often resulting in settlement of the area.⁵² One state agency representative diplomatically explained, “we need to work as a team, lawyers appropriate money and build roads without qualifications of engineers, other examples are dredging and sand. Our leaders are not well educated enough.” An NGO representative stated it more directly, “the condition not good for watershed because Pohnpei state government are doing all the development projects and still also running conservation. Getting more money for development they forget about conservation.” Still another noted, “if a mangrove is a protected mangrove, government will designate it a dredging site and will go ahead and dredge it.”

People in communities also shared similar views as one traditional leader said, “problems from government now, marine and upland, clearing. In the uplands, they make the roads and destroy habitat for species, in marine, they are dredging and destroy the marine life.” One woman told of going to the chief minister of her municipal government

⁵² This conflict of interest was noted by the author’s own experiences while on Pohnpei. Since most restaurants on the island are connected to hotels, the author frequently noted several local meetings, conferences, and functions held at these hotels. Many of these meetings were state government related. It was interesting to note that often, the selection of the hotel venue for these activities coincided with the Senator who owned the establishment. When the author noted this observation to a lawyer working at the national legislature, it was stated that government related functions were scheduled in these hotels so Senators could profit through these functions and that this practice was common knowledge.

to complain about coral dredging in her village done by the owner of one of the hotels. She was told that there was nothing the municipal government could do since the governor and Pohnpei Environmental Protection Agency had given the hotel owner permission to dredge. These issues are also a reason why municipal governments often felt they would be better managers of watershed areas. Said one municipal government head, “state is giving land to their own interest, not to benefit our people...they give land to their friends and relatives, not looking at needs of people.” Another stated, “they [state] don’t understand the difference between development and conservation. They don’t understand that it’s more important to protect this area than build a road.”

Another concern was election politics and the challenges leaders faced in making hard decisions unpopular with constituents but necessary for improving the state of the watershed. Concerning the current governor, one person noted, “he wants to get elected, so he won’t move out the fishermen and sakau planters.” Another commented on state senators saying, “some of the senators tell Kitti people don’t listen to the state, don’t move down [from upland forests]. Some of these leaders incapable of telling the truth, especially when approach elections...they only care about being elected.” Regarding enforcement issues, it was said, “political suicide if they prosecute farmers.”

The concern of making government accountable for its actions was another challenge cited. Though Pohnpei’s government is based on the U.S. governance system of executive, legislative, and judiciary branches, other checks and balance systems such as citizen watch-dog groups and an informed constituency lobbying representatives and applying the mechanism of accountability have yet to develop. Other challenges related to the state deal with gaining support from the administration, raising watershed

management to a higher priority in the state's agenda, and improving its financial infrastructure system (particularly budgetary allocation and spending). As one U.S. federal agency representative noted, "staff and forestry hasn't been able to organize effectively. Frustration on lack of executive branch. FSM and Pohnpei state fiscal systems have been dysfunctional so requires a lot of energy."

Destructive activities. The management of destructive activities continues to be a challenge as cited by many interviewed. Though sakau plantings continue to be the major concern, activities related to the state's permitting for development leading to coral dredging on the coasts and road building are of growing concern. Managing such growth and development on the island is critical to watershed management as these activities, particularly the building of roads, increases access to upland forests and encourages settlement in these areas. Though mainly cited by U.S. federal agencies, other issues to consider are use of pesticides for farming, dynamite fishing in coral areas, and the growth of invasive species.

Outside influences. Of particular concern to many interviewed was managing the effect of outside influences, mainly western patterns of consumption, on traditional Pohnpeian lifestyles and leadership structures. One reason why sakau farming has been so destructive is that it provides Pohnpeians with the income to buy western goods and luxury items, from canned meats to electronic equipments and larger items such as cars and concrete homes, "people depend on imported food now...interest in maintaining local food is not there." Another person put it more succinctly, "it all comes down to money." This is particularly true for the young, "the young generation don't know what happened yesterday...the young want imported food, this causes them to plant sakau in

the watershed.” This move from a subsistence economy to a cash economy has been one of the legacies of the colonial periods and Trust Territory days as western goods were introduced along with western styles of government and economic growth principles, “because they want money, they want to plant sakau, money is creating the problem.” Such changes in consumption patterns, accumulation of wealth, exposure to other societies (by those leaving Pohnpei for either schooling or jobs in places such as Hawaii and Guam), also affect adherence to traditional customs and rules of conduct within communities, particularly as it relates to the traditional leadership system. As one historian noted, “there is a tendency to provide imports during tribute to chiefs, nahmwarki is now seen as a consumer, reinforcing a different system.” When speaking to traditional leaders as well as other Pohnpeians in communities, they expressed concern that many youth, now focused on making money instead of traditional farming, do not listen to traditional leaders. As one individual noted, “the traditional management system is breaking down, especially among the young. They are the ones planting sakau for money, someone has to talk to them.” However, the problem is that, “there’s a trend that traditional custom is breaking down, especially when dealing with commerce and money. They [youth] can get anything without help of the chiefs. They look at chiefs now as figure heads.” A traditional leader also voiced this concern when he said, “now that money comes in, people step back from traditional leaders because they don’t need the traditional leader’s help.” Since the role of traditional leaders in watershed management is to guide and advise their communities on appropriate activities and stewardship of watershed areas, the breakdown of this structure and ability to exert influence in communities is of concern.⁵³ This challenge of adhering to tradition while moving

⁵³ The evolution of traditional lifestyles and its negative impact on watershed management can be

forward into a changed world was poignantly phrased by a Pohnpeian when he stated, “[it’s] hard to go back to the past and hard to jump to the future.”

Outside influences also refer to the issue of decreasing Compact funding. As one politician noted, “everything is U.S. subsidized, [Pohnpei] has gone so far on a false economy...beyond the point of no return.” Since the state’s main revenue source is from Compact funding and it provides most of the jobs on the island (there is hardly any private sector development on Pohnpei), its decrease in the years ahead could also lead to increased sakau farming, as sakau is the only other alternative to income generation available. As one person noted with concern, “the problem that still exists is when economic situations deteriorate, concerns for the environment become less. Stepping down of money from the U.S. and little economic industry, people will lose sight of long-term focus for day-to-day needs.” Others stated the problem of decreased Compact funding in the following ways, “one of the biggest challenges is finding good, passionate, local people...getting people to go home facing low pay, asking students who have a degree...willing to go back for \$18,000 salary and a different standard of living [is hard],” “we need to develop economy to create jobs to provide alternatives. We can’t ask them to stop planting without providing alternatives.” One politician outlined the problem best when he explained:

People like having money now and there is a change in lifestyle...education is good, but if you can’t use it, you get frustrated. We [state]

seen in the history of sakau use. Sakau’s preparation, consumption, and use in the old days were relegated strictly for ceremonies and traditional chiefs. However, sakau, though still considered a sacred drink, has moved from its position of limited use by traditional chiefs to that of wide consumption by regular Pohnpeians with many households having their own stones in which to pound the plant roots in preparation for drink by family members and friends almost every evening. As one Pohnpeian noted, “they [people] plant there [in the uplands] instead of lowlands, but it was never done like that before. Before they didn’t drink it every night, only for ceremonies.” This increase in consumption (both in number of people and frequency) has led to increased demands for the plant and as such increased plantings in the watershed areas.

can't put people to work, can't ask valedictorians to go back to tend taro patches... watershed management is not just an area, but deals with the whole of Pohnpei... you have to deal with economics first, before you can address conservation.⁵⁴

Planning for the Future: Next Steps in Moving Forward

When parties were asked what needed to happen in the next five years to improve watershed management on the island, the recommendations fell into two categories: 1) implementing activities (expressed as laying down the boundary line for the Watershed Forest Reserve, enforcement, and increasing education and outreach activities); and 2) improving planning/coordination and relationships (which will be discussed in the following chapter with organizational challenges). The overwhelming overlap in responses expressed broadly across all stakeholder groups concerning most of these recommendations is encouraging because it reveals a level of support for certain strategies and can help to direct future watershed management activities.

Laying down the Watershed Forest Reserve boundary line. Almost all agreed that the number one activity to focus on in the next five years was finishing the boundary line for the Watershed Forest Reserve, “boundary line not in the ground, and that is a big problem. If it is in the ground, it will help... boundary line isn't in place so they [people] work any place they want.” Another put it as, “boundary first. How can we protect something we don't know where it is.” With the line finished in U, half of Madolenihmw done, and the state legislature appropriating funds to finish the rest of the island, finishing

⁵⁴ Additional challenges cited were Pohnpei's growing population, convincing people to take on stewardship roles and to think long-term (a difficulty as one person stated, “our people never think about the future, just tomorrow, that is the problem”), keeping momentum and support for watershed activities going, and continuing to balance the top-down/bottom-up approaches to watershed management.

the boundary line looks promising and seems to be effective as one U person noted, “people don’t respect [watershed], but when people see the line they respect it.”

Enforcement. Conducting enforcement was the next activity expressed by most parties as a priority for the next five years. Those interviewed suggested activities such as issuing citations (including stripping people of titles if they are caught), developing a system to report infractions (including addressing the issue of squatters) and monitoring, increasing capacity for enforcement by establishing authority to conduct enforcement activities beyond the police department and DoF (e.g. communities, CCOs, municipal governments), and creating a ranger patrol to canvass the watershed. Interviewees shared these thoughts on approaches to enforcement: “village chiefs should appoint a very reliable person and work on their behalf, someone the farmers will respect and listen to,” “don’t go to police, approach chief ministers and they will approach the intruders, talk to them as a local person,” “government should be the one to provide enforcement,” “having people police themselves, this is the best approach...self-enforcement is more realistic if you can convince people it’s for the best.”

Increasing education activities and outreach. Along with enforcement, education and outreach was the second most expressed recommendation across stakeholder groups. Examples included education to decrease clearings, raising awareness, promoting stewardship, addressing sustainability issues, reviving the earlier education workshops in communities to share what has been learned, accomplished, and changed in the last 16 years, and developing educational outreach programs to target

specific groups such as senators and sakau farmers to build support for sustainable watershed management for the entire island.⁵⁵

By reflecting on past accomplishments, understanding current challenges, and identifying actions in moving forward, this chapter has revealed several key insights for the watershed management program. The lessons derived from past experiences will be useful in developing strategies in order to address current challenges. Similarly, the overlap in responses from interviewees concerning next steps will also help to guide the program in moving forward. However, additional factors also affect efficacy with regard to watershed management. In the next chapter, these factors (in the form of organizational issues) will be discussed and analysis deriving key observations and lessons, challenges, and shared views on next steps continued.

⁵⁵ Additional recommendations that were cited by different groups included finding alternatives to sakau farming (e.g. continuing the Grow Low Campaign, improving agroforestry methods), zoning the watershed into different use areas and developing a permit process for these areas, increasing monitoring activities, improving and increasing scientific information for the watershed to improve management, avoiding eviction of farmers, having more economic summits as was conducted in U, resolving land use and ownerships issues, finding passionate individuals to get involved with efforts, and creating more conservation areas.