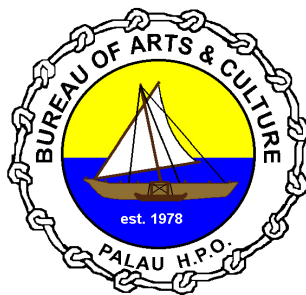


Training of Leaders in Cultural Heritage Protection in Asia and the Pacific
(Nara, 21 June – 1 July 2010)
JAPAN

Country Report: PALAU
The Protection of the Cultural Properties



Prepared by
Sunny O. Ngirmang
Palau National Registrar
May 2010

BAC Bureau of Arts & Culture

PNC Palau National Code

Abstract

Cultural heritage protection by means of public education is an effective medium for the positive awareness at the local community level. In addition it provides enough force for capacity building of key stakeholders or advocates and other leaders to set the stage for community level goals towards cultural resource management mechanisms.

This will promote effective and sustainable resource management, training, public education and awareness, and advocacy that will instigate community based efforts and goals in preserving archaeological heritage sites. Cultural resource management will allocate the awareness of traditional cultural heritage that would embody sustainability and sensitivity towards cultural antiquity.

This report will examine the measures taken within the Bureau of Arts & Culture (BAC) and its subdivisions of their educational programs and other aid in helping the community [at the state and local level] plan medium-term goals for historic preservation as well as long-term preservation objectives geared for their state.

Introduction

The Palau Island is the westernmost archipelago in the Caroline chain approximately 7 degrees North of the equator, consisting of six island groups totaling more than five hundred high and low islands (only 16 of which are inhabited) including World War II battleground of Peleliu and world-famous mushroom shaped rock islands.

After three decades as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific under US Administration, this westernmost archipelago opted for independence in 1978. A Compact of Free Association with the US was approved in 1986, but not ratified until 1993. It entered into force the following year when the island gained independence.

Bureau of Arts & Culture

First established in 1978, then called the Division of Cultural Affairs and is presently the Bureau of Arts & Culture through Executive Order No. 203 since 2001, is a Palau governmental entity under the Ministry of Community & Cultural Affairs, which mandates a framework for the adequate protection of archaeological sites and tangible cultural resources (Emesiochel 2008: 4).

Additionally, the Bureau implements Section 106 of the US National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The Bureau helps in the implementation of acceptable historic preservation laws in the 16 states of the Republic of Palau.

The Bureau receives funds from the Palau National Government and the Historic Preservation Funds from the U.S. National Parks Service, Department of the Interior. The Bureau has a total

of 11 staff members. It operates with the advice and assistance from the 16-member Palau Historical and Cultural Advisory Board, 16-member Society of Historians, and 5-member Technical and Professional Review Committee.

Goals

- 1. To preserve and foster historic properties for the benefit of all Palauan people**
- 2. To preserve, and educate about, Palauan traditions that are threatened with extinction**
- 3. To protect historic properties from destruction**
- 4. To preserve cultures and traditions in the face of inevitable increasing foreign contact and interaction**

Mission

The Bureau protects and preserves the Republic's cultural and historical resources to enhance, enrich, and foster the Palauan heritage, now and into the future.

BAC accomplishes its mission in accordance with enabling legislation and acceptable regulations and standards by capturing and documenting the knowledge of elders for posterity; conducting archaeological surveys; identifying and restoring sites; conducting and documenting ethnographic research; promoting contemporary and traditional art; and ensuring that opportunities for education are available for everyone.

Organization

The Bureau of Arts & Culture is comprised of five main sections: Administration and Planning; Survey, Inventory, & Archaeology; Oral History/Ethnography; Palau National Register of Historic Places which oversees the Palau Research Library and; Public Education. *See appendix for organization chart.*

All BAC sections works in collaboration with other agencies but not limited to the Palau Visitors Authority, Belau National Museum, and Palau Community College for the effective education, advocacy, and awareness of cultural heritage protection and all associated facets. These include scheduled field trips for site visitation and others.

Programs & Services

Each of the sections is specialized to carry out particular roles and responsibilities for the overall betterment and successful operation and interest of the Bureau pursuant to PNC Title 19.

Administration and Planning's responsibilities include:

- 1. Seek fiscal support through grants, donations, and special projects**



2. Increase cooperation with various agencies and organizations in order to achieve the objectives of the Bureau
3. Help coordinate and organize major national cultural activities and events
4. Perform overall management of human and fiscal resources of the Bureau

The **Survey, Inventory/Archaeology Section** is responsible for the overall archaeological survey in the territorial lands and waters of the Republic. More specifically, the Survey & Inventory/Archaeology's responsibilities include:

1. Conduct historical clearance and compliance (project review)
2. Oversee all historical sites of Palau including underwater sites
3. Conduct annual Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of Palau's historic and cultural properties
4. Produce yearly calendars
5. Compile and maintain identified cultural and historical sites database
6. Reviews and approves archaeological research from local and outside scholars

This section assist in public education in “disseminating information and educating the public through presentations and site visits, in order to foster awareness and importance of protecting, preserving, and conserving our cultural heritage that is our national identity for our future generations” (Emesiochel 2008: 8).

The **Oral History/Ethnography Section** main purpose is to collect oral histories and document accounts and events associated with the myth, folklore, and legends of Palau. They conduct state-by-state visits meeting with local informants and other community members collecting stories by video taping, audio recording, and photography. The Oral History section also conducts educational sessions on how to collect ethnographical data for high school students as well as other potential researches. Specifically, responsibilities include:

1. Work with the Society of Historians to document and publish oral histories and traditional customary practices
2. Work with elders to ensure their knowledge are recorded and saved
3. Conduct ethnographic research (resulting in ethnographic reports)
4. Responsible for the collection of oral histories and traditional customary practices of Palau
5. Collect information, per request, on historical sites as identified by the Survey & Inventory/Archaeology Section
6. Assist in conducting tours and visits to historic and cultural sites for educational purposes
7. Conduct school presentations on ethnographical data

Public Education

It is hoped that through our education and awareness programs, the local state government and community will gain interest for the preservation and protection of their states' tangible cultural properties.

The BAC Public Education Section aims to:

1. To educate the public and to make them aware of the importance of protecting and preserving Palau's cultural heritage and historic and cultural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.
2. Design and implement educational programs to school students and younger generations on the importance of historic preservation.
3. Conduct tours and visits to historic and cultural sites for educational purposes.
4. Conduct workshops and training purposely to educate the general public on the importance of historic preservation.
5. To publicize the Bureau's programs and its mission.

Other specified duties and responsibilities and special projects include:

1. Produce BAC bi-annual newsletters
2. Organize the annual BAC Symposium
3. Develop website
4. Assist to organize cultural events and conferences
5. Work with state governments to develop preservation and protection activities
6. Assist to produce BAC brochures and posters



Newsletter being distributed to schools, libraries, government agencies, and NGO's

The Palau National Register of Historic Places

The Palau National Register of Historic Places is the official roster of the nation's historic properties, sites, districts, structures, objects, and landmarks.

The Palau National Register of Historic Places was created by the Palau Historical & Cultural Preservation Act (PNC 19 § 102). Administered by the Bureau of Arts & Culture, the Palau National Register of Historic Places is intended to serve as the official inventory of all those historical sites and tangible cultural properties which are deemed of significance to the Palauan people and culture hence worth preserving, plus be protected from destruction and impairment.

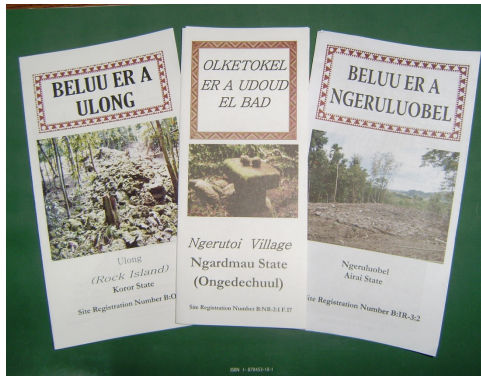
The Palau Register is the legal instrument to ensure that registered properties or properties that may be eligible, threatened by public or private development will be subject to comment and review in accordance with the procedures prescribed by law.

The primary goal of the Palau Register is to preserve significant historic and cultural properties through the means provided by PNC 19. More specifically, the Palau Register seeks to:

1. Assess and record the history and achievements of the Palauan people as reflected in historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects;
2. To aid Palauan municipalities in the preparation of comprehensive preservation;
3. To assist in the preservation of the tangible reminders of history;

4. Extend to all such properties a degree of protection by insuring compliance with procedures whenever and wherever the law applies and;
5. Nominate eligible tangible cultural properties for inclusion on the Palau Register.

The office of the Registrar supervises and oversees the full operation and success of the Palau Research Library which stores important documents, photos, tapes, reports from Palau and other regions of the Pacific.



← Registered Sites Brochures

Research Library →



Advisory Board

The Palau Historical and Cultural Advisory Board are appointed by the President of the Republic after receiving nominations for candidates from each state government. The Historical & Cultural Advisory Board shall review and approve all nominations to the Palau Register as well as nominations of Palauan properties to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. The review board's evaluation of Register nominations shall seek to determine whether the registration form demonstrates that the property meets Register criteria for inclusion on the Palau Register.

In addition to reviewing the application for register eligibility criteria, the Review Board shall provide leadership in the recognition for Palau's historic properties. In essence, it is the responsibility of the Board to serve as representative of the Palauan people and thereby to identify the types of properties that are significant within the Republic. In doing so, the Review Board should consider the range of ideological, social, cultural, political, archaeological, and scientific factors which may influence such decision.

The 16 members serve as liaison between the Bureau and their respective states.



Palau Historical & Cultural Advisory Board

Limitations & Challenges

Although the Bureau has a well defined scope of work for each of the sections, some of the problems including efficient funding from the local government and other technicalities limit the Bureau to perform to its fullest potential hence affecting performance. More specifically, the Bureau's main challenges are as follows:

- ✿ Adequate training for staff in specified areas to evaluate skills and ability
- ✿ Equipments for electronic storage capacity for database and archival materials
- ✿ Not enough personnel to carry out Bureau tasks
- ✿ Lack of sufficient office space i.e. field equipment storage, artifact preservation laboratory, library storage facility, etc.

In terms of policy governing the protection of heritage sites, the majority of the local state governments have legislation in place however lack the human resource capacity to perform the necessary monitoring and protection of their sites.

Interim BAC Recommendations (for the State Level)

The Bureau can assist in establishing management and preservation plans at the state level. This will ensure that the local state government is equipped with the necessary means to perform its measures.

Long-term Management & Recommendations

- Create a competent authority with a mandate to protect cultural, historical and WWII sites & develop Institutional capacity
- Create an Inventory (Registry) of sites – database
- Create the capacity for Identification, location, survey, assessment, monitoring, permit systems and enforcement (policing) for sites
 - Issues – pillaging and looting, human remains – educate state rangers and tour guides
- Create communications network between State Government Departments/Agencies and competent agency i.e. BAC
- Including WWII sites into existing environmental legislative and administrative frameworks (Environmental Impact Assessment – Development application)
 - Issues are Development, looting, etc
- Create a substantial disaster management plan

Training and Education

- In-state short course Public/Community Education and Awareness Program
 - Issues - Community involvement and awareness, Potential for conflict with Customary & Traditional Law/Ownership and Conflicting traditional ownership claims, etc
- In-state Training (short course/placements) of Government/Community/Cultural officer's i.e. state rangers, tour guides, etc
- Training for cultural heritage managers (decision makers)

- Training state historical preservation officers
- Create education and training networks (by email listserv)

Reference

Emesiochel, Calvin T.

2008 Palau County Report: Training Course on Cultural Heritage Protection: Research, Analysis and Preservation of Archaeological Sites and Remains. Nara: Japan

Ngirmang, Sunny O.

2006 Cultural Variation & Diversity. Directive Studies. Hawaii: University of Hawaii-Hilo

2009 Palau Country Report: UNESCO Workshop on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Pacific. Honiara: Solomon Islands

Palau National Code

Title 19 § 102 Historical & Cultural Preservation Act

Palau National Register of Historic Places Manual

The Bureau of Arts & Culture reserves its duties and responsibilities to safeguard and protect our cultural environment and archaeological context pursuant to PNC Title 19 and its specified guidelines and administrative rules and regulations.

APPENDIX A: Sample Photos of Bureau's Activities and Programs

Oral History Section



Booklet Publication



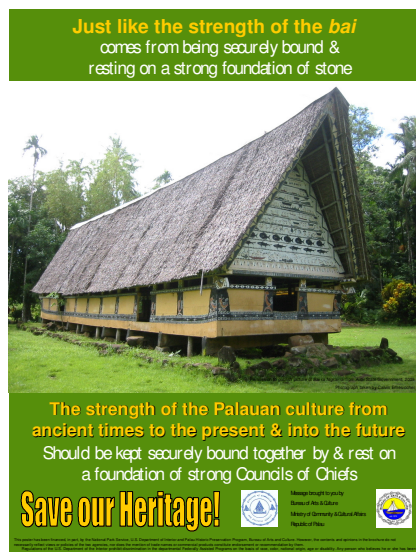
School Presentations

Archaeology Section



Guide for field trips; demonstrates how archaeological work is done

Public Education Section



Posters and Brochures



BAC annual Symposium (Heritage Tour)

APPENDIX B: BAC Organization Chart

