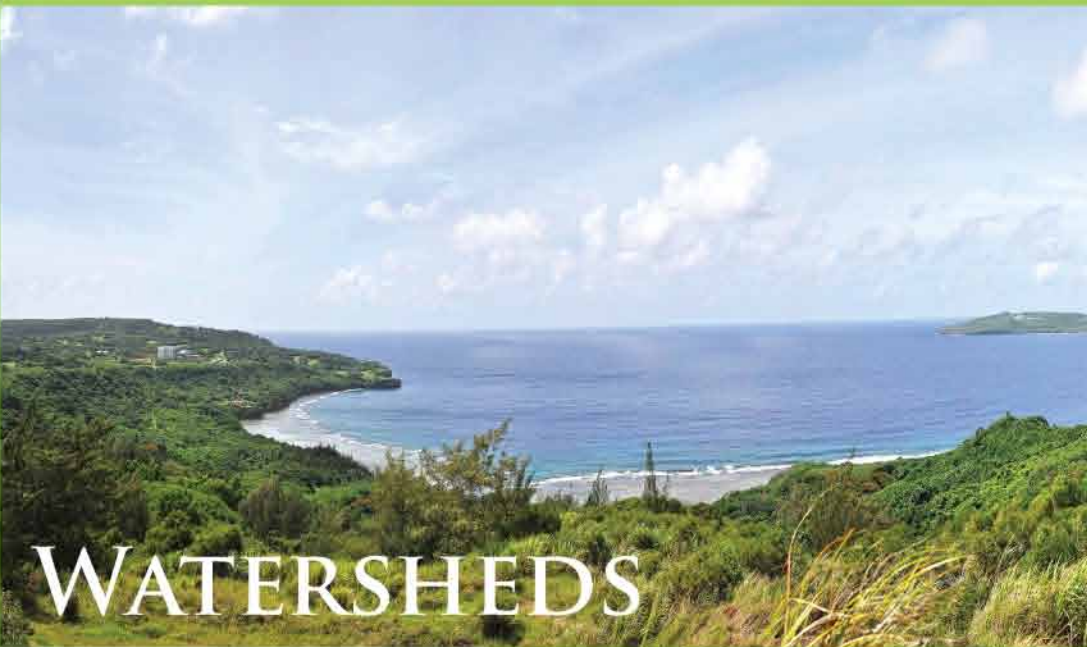




PROTECT OUR SEA, PLANT A TREE!



WATERSHEDS

Saipan's Watersheds

A watershed is an area of land where all the rain that falls drains to the same place. Since the CNMI doesn't have rivers or lakes and only very few streams, all of our watersheds are coastal, meaning they drain to the ocean.

Each watershed is a slice of the island, like a slice of pie, reaching from a high point out to the coast. Within each watershed rainwater follows the natural slopes of the land to flow into a certain part of the ocean.

Keeping our watersheds healthy protects the quality of our ecosystems on land and in the ocean.

Reduce land clearing and other bad land use practices

Wherever you see bare soil, you're seeing water pollution waiting to happen. When land is cleared and left bare, the soil is easily washed away by rain and strong winds. This is called soil erosion. The loose soil runs into the streams and pollutes our waters. The coral reefs are affected by the dirty water. Many animals such as our native birds and wildlife lose their homes when trees are cut down.

Everytime we disturb the soil or cut down a tree in any part of our island, we affect the watershed. Because much of the low part of the island forest has been cleared for houses and villages, the upper watershed is even more important in providing clean water for us.



Trees are giant water pumps. They absorb water from the soil through their roots and moisture from the air.

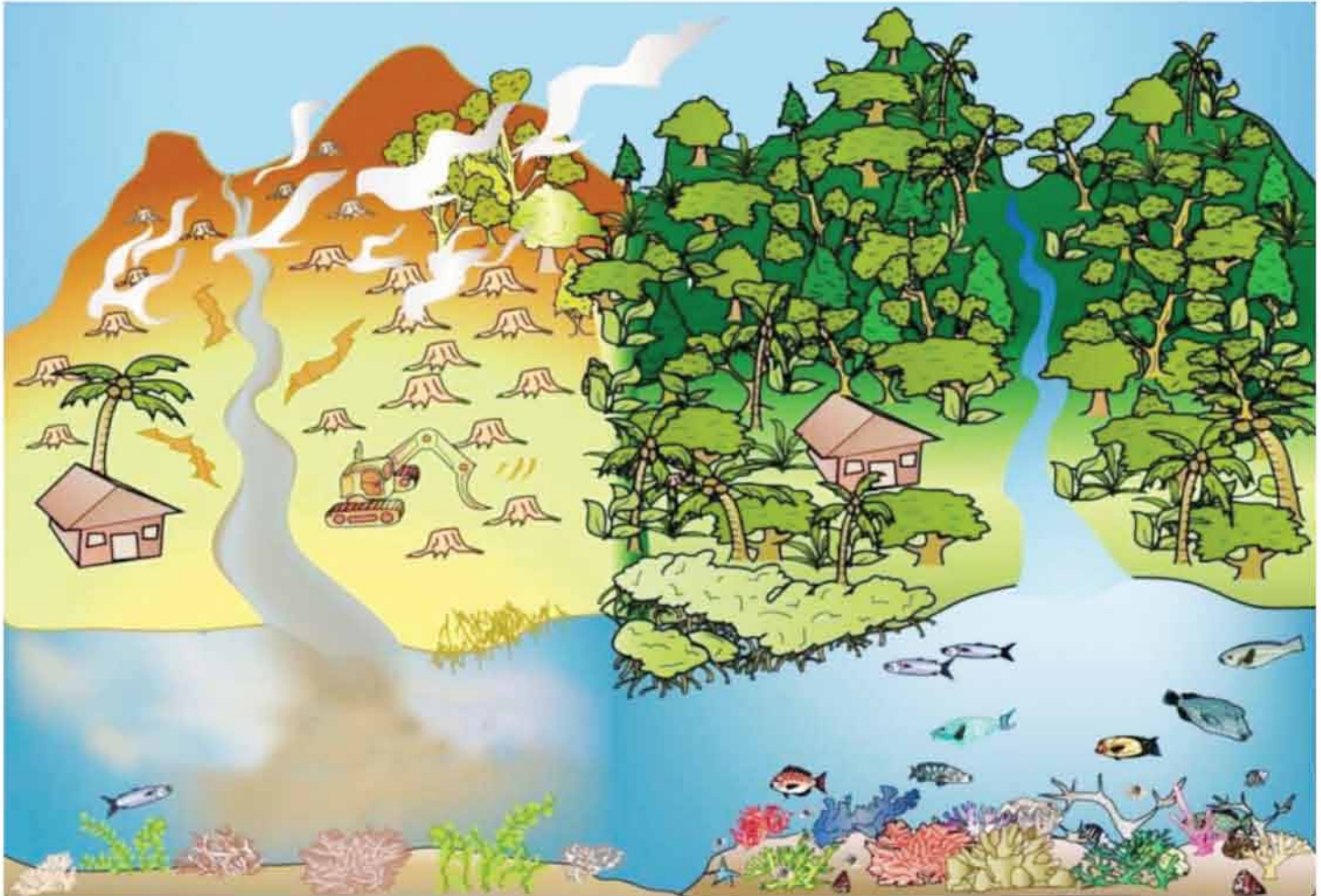
Trees help keep water flowing through the soil, into the air, and back again.

The roots of trees and vegetation holds soil in place, helping to prevent erosion and protect our reefs.

WE ALL LIVE IN A WATERSHED

CONNECTING LAND AND SEA

What happens to the land happens to the sea.



2002 International Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific.

Who lives in watersheds?

All of us live in a watershed. It doesn't matter where we live, we will always be part of a watershed. It doesn't matter if the ocean is in front of your yard or miles away, pollution anywhere within that watershed may affect all other water bodies located downstream from it.

Why are watersheds important?

Watersheds are very important. Watersheds protect our groundwater and keep our land from flooding.

What can go wrong?

When plants and trees are replaced by roads, parking lots, and rooftops, it has a negative effect on the ocean. This increases the speed and amount of rainwater runoff flowing downhill towards the sea and causes erosion. Runoff also carries pollutants such as oil, bacteria, nutrients, dirt, and metals towards the ocean as it speeds down.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE LAND IS GOOD FOR THE SEA

By Shelly Kremer
Micronesica Bird Conservation

POOR

Eurasian
Tree
Sparrow



Did you know?

Some of the birds found in your yard are found only here in the Northern Mariana Islands and nowhere else in the world?!

Turns out birds are extremely important for maintaining a healthy forest which in turn keeps our reefs healthy and alive. Yes, birds keep our reefs healthy and alive. It turns out birds are actually good indicators of forest health, not having native birds means poor forest health.

NOT BAD

Micronesian
Honey Eater



Micronesia
Starling



Bridled
white-eye



Connecting land and sea

Our forest is extremely important in helping maintain good water quality and preventing soil and nutrients from washing into our lagoon-both of which keep our reefs healthy and alive. If we want to manage our water quality, fisheries, and coral reefs...we have to first look at how we treat the land because it is all connected –ridge to reef.

IS YOUR YARD BIRD FRIENDLY?

Litmus Test for Your Yard

The "Litmus Test" is a simple way to figure out what type of yard you have by recognizing the types of birds that visit your yard.

As a landowner, homeowner, renter, business owner you can take a simple test! Go sit quietly in your yard and watch which birds are flying around and living in your yard. If you only see the Eurasian Tree Sparrow then your yard is poor quality and not bird friendly. These birds are not native and like open grassy areas.

If you see the Bridled white-eye, Micronesian Starling or the Micronesian Honeyeater then your yard is okay bird habitat. If you have the Rufous Fantail, Golden white-eye, or Mariana Fruit Dove then your yard is excellent and you have done an awesome job of making your yard bird friendly.

GREAT

Saipan
Golden
white-eye



Mariana
Fruit Dove



Rufous
Fantail



What can you do?

If your yard ended on the poor side of bird friendly don't worry because luckily our birds are easy to please. Simply plant a tree, native trees are best of course, but our birds are not too picky. You can talk to CNMI Division of Forestry for some native tree ideas. We have all sorts of native trees, some that grow big and some that even stay small, so depending on yard size, there is something for everyone!

Hi! I'm Lulu,
the Canario from Laolao!
Here are some simple actions you
can take to keep our watersheds healthy:



- Apply for a DEQ Earthmoving & Erosion Control permit before you start any earthmoving activity including, filling, grading, or clearing of vegetation.
- Plant trees and shrubs to act as a filter between your property and nearby downhill waterways like streets, streams, storm drains, or other paths to the ocean.
- Plant grass seed and mulch on any bare soil on your land.
- Minimize the time soil is exposed when you do construction or landscaping.
- Report mud running off from construction sites to Division of Environmental Quality at 664-8500.
- Install a rain barrel.
- Water your yard efficiently by watering at the appropriate time of day.
- Use the minimum amount of fertilizers and pesticides. A little goes a long way!
- Be careful with household chemicals that can be washed into the ocean.
- Clean up pet waste. It's best to throw it in the garbage or flush it down the toilet. Pet and animal waste contains bacteria, viruses, parasites, and nutrients that pollute water and are harmful to humans, marine life, and the ocean.
- Take care of your car. Corrosion of vehicle parts is a source of heavy metals that end up on roads and get washed out to our oceans.
- Organize a neighborhood project such as cleaning up drainage ditches and clearing debris from storm drains.
- Invite Division of Environmental Quality to make a presentation at your local school or community center.
- Become a part of the Laolao Bay Pride Campaign! Contact Jihan Buniag at Division of Environmental Quality for more information 664-8500.

