



State of the Mangrove in **EASTERN SAMAR**

The Editors, based on inputs from Eastern Samar participants

I. Introduction

The province of Eastern Samar lies in the eastern seaboard of the island of Samar (125°50' East and 10°50' North). It is bounded in the north by the province of Northern Samar, in the east by the Pacific Ocean, in the south by the Leyte Gulf, and in the west by Western Samar. Eastern Samar has twenty-two municipalities (with one city, Borongan City) and 597 barangays. The Borongan City is the seat of the provincial government. As of 2010, the province has a total population of 467,160 (PSA 2015).

The province has a Type II climate, which is characterized by the absence of dry season with very pronounced maximum rainy period generally occurring

from November to January. The province has a total land area of 422,965 ha, where 236,590 ha is classified as timber land and 197,375 ha as alienable or disposable land.

Importance of mangroves

Mangroves are acknowledged in reducing the impacts of typhoons, waves, and flooding. They are also recognized primarily as a source of food, for some as source of charcoal (although illegal), and ecotourism. The province has the Guiuan Protected Landscape and Seascape, home of nilad/sagasa or *Scyphiphora hydrophyllacea*. Mangrove rehabilitation projects provide a supplemental source of income through contracted/hired labor.

II. Status of Mangroves

In a survey made after Super Typhoon (ST) Yolanda (international name: Haiyan), there were about 3,700 ha of mangroves and beach forests that need immediate rehabilitation. According to the survey of the local government, almost 50 % of the mangrove areas were devastated during the onslaught of the ST. Most of the damaged mangroves were from the municipalities of Balangkayan down to Guiuan (which constitute around 50 % of mangrove areas facing the Pacific Ocean). Aside from the vulnerability of the province to frequent typhoons, human activities, such as cutting and charcoal making, are one of the main threats on mangrove conservation.

III. Mangrove Protection and Management

Extensive mangrove rehabilitation in the province started after the onslaught of ST Yolanda. This project was funded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and supervised by the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB). The province planted around 2,553 ha. There were also mangrove plantations in the municipalities of Dolores (214 ha) and Borongan (339 ha). To ensure good quality propagules, the ERDB initiated the establishment of a Seed Production Area (around 4.0 ha) in 2014 which predominantly grow *Rhizophora* spp.

The DENR Regional Office created a composite team that conducted the Monitoring and Evaluation of the established Mangrove and Beach Forest Development Project (MBFDP). **Fig. 1** shows the location of the Mangrove and Beach Forest Development Program sites. Most of the target beneficiaries of the program are the local community or PO members. They are responsible for planting and monitoring.

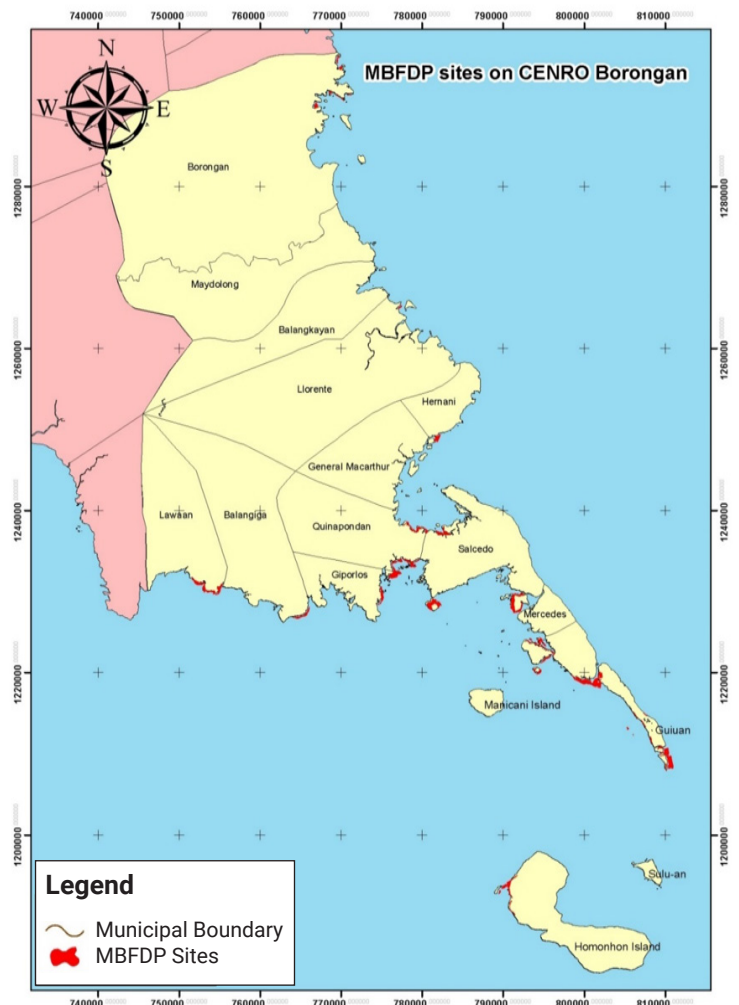


Figure 1. Location of Mangrove and Beach Forest Development Project in Eastern Samar.

IV. Summary and Recommendations

Eastern Samar is directly exposed to the strong waves from the Pacific Ocean and strong winds during typhoon season. This makes the province vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is important that the mangrove forests are conserved to buffer the impacts of these natural disturbances. In 2013, the province was hit by ST Yolanda (first landfall in Guiuan) and devastated the communities and mangroves. To help alleviate the impacts of climate change and achieve a resilient community, several planting activities were done. These planting activities were implemented by the CENRO Dolores and CENRO Borongan, and other non-government organizations, with the help of PO.

There are still struggles to achieve a climate-resilient province. There must be enough personnel that should be engaged in implementing the mangrove management program. Aside from enticing community participation

in the planting program, the programs should also be designed in a way that the communities will gain additional income. Other suggestions to achieve a resilient and sustainable community is through effective law enforcement especially in apprehending charcoal making, and in preventing informal settlers to establish residence in the mangrove areas.

V. References

Presentation during the Mangrove Summit.
PSA 2015 survey.