



**SAMOA CONSERVATION
SOCIETY
SOSAIETE FAASAO
O SAMOA**

DECEMBER 2018

Conserve Samoa Newsletter



Message from the President

The Samoa Conservation Society (SCS) or “Sosaiete Fa’asao o Samoa” turned five years old on July 1, 2018. Since our beginnings in 2013 we have grown to be an active and well- recognised Samoan environmental NGO.

Our mission to conserve Samoa’s natural heritage becomes more critical every year as our biodiversity continues to be impacted by a battery of threats from invasive species, habitat degradation, pollution, the over-harvest of natural resources and climate change. After a long hiatus we finally have a newsletter to share with you, our members! This newsletter highlights some of our current and planned projects and we appeal to all our members to become more engaged in our conservation efforts, such as forest restoration, tree planting, invasive species management, environmental research, clean-up days, environmental awareness activities or even just to enjoy nature and go walking in the forest or bird watching.

Our main goal is to engage more with our members; to have more events and activities and to encourage more “green’ behaviour”. We hope our members will consider how their lifestyle impacts on the environment- to consider carefully the impacts of our daily behaviour, our shopping preferences, our travel patterns, our use of resources, how we manage waste, and whether we try to reduce or offset our carbon and energy footprints. The future of Samoa is in all of our hands- collectively we can try our best to manage our impacts and to create a sustainable world, or we can be complacent and watch as environmental threats mount up until they become unmanageable. As optimists we believe the future is bright, but we will need to make some small sacrifices in the way we live our lives, to reduce our environmental impact on our vulnerable island nation. We encourage you to join us for the sake of Samoa’s natural heritage, now and in the future!

James Atherton, President of the Samoa Conservation Society

Welcoming Our New Board: 2018- 2019

The Samoa Conservation Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday the 20th of August at the Apia Yacht Club. It was a great day for the Society as a new board was elected. The following members were chosen to continue the amazing work of the Society in the coming year.

President - James Atherton

Vice President - Sala Josephine Stowers

Secretary - Faleafaga Toni Tipama'a

Treasurer - Moeumu Uili

Executive Members- Leilani Duffy, Kathleen Taituave, Paul Anderson, Benjamin Harding.

We would like to take this opportunity to especially thank our previous Board members for all their tremendous work and commitment to saving Samoa's biodiversity.



Tree Planting Day



On the 4th of August, the Samoa Conservation Society held a very successful tree planting day at Vailima Botanic Gardens.

With the help of volunteers, members, and the Division of Environment and Conservation MNRE we were able to plant 600 native trees.

It was a great day where families and friends of the Society were able to get their hands dirty and help with combating invasive species by planting 600 native trees in the botanic garden.

We rounded out the day with a BBQ celebrating all the hard work by the volunteers.

**600 natives trees planted at
Vailima Botanic Gardens**

Guardians Va'a Based Environmental Education Campaign



The Samoa Conservation Society is proud to be collaborating with Conservation International on a new and exciting initiative. The collaborative group comprises of the Samoa Voyaging Society, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), Youth Climate Action Network Samoa (YCAN), National University of Samoa (NUS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESCC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The two-year campaign aims to facilitate educational programmes with local children in different communities throughout Samoa. The five key environmental modules will cover issues facing local communities while disseminating important environmental knowledge, key to maintaining sustainable lifestyles. The modules that will be facilitated by local educators are Trash Star, Coral Champion, Tree Champion, Wise Fisher and Samoan and Cultural Voyager.

As part of our collaboration we were able to deliver key messages to primary school students on terrestrial and marine conservation as well as the preservation of cultural heritage and the art of traditional voyaging.

During this field trip we explored the Lotopu'e Mangroves in Aleipata where we highlighted their importance as storm surge buffers, habitats for fish, crabs and small crustaceans, as well as preventing erosion and a source of food for coastal communities. We hope to continue this project throughout Samoa in 2019.

"Five key environmental modules are delivered through the Guardians campaign"

Thirty Rural Youth Engaged in forest restoration at O Le Pupū Pu'e National Park.

The Samoa Climate Smart Reforestation Carbon Offset Project (C-offset) kickstarted in Togitogiga in January 2018.

Thirty young people from the villages of Sa'aga, Poutasi and Saleilua on Upolu were successfully inducted at the beginning of the year as "Environmental Champions" and to conduct forest restoration as part of SCS's C-offset project. The C-offset project was developed by SCS in 2016 in partnership with the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and the Poutasi Development Trust and is funded through the Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility, and supported by private individuals and delegates to the annual SPREP meeting who are offsetting their carbon emissions from international flights. The project tackles restoration of degraded rainforest, youth unemployment and poverty, and is raising the environmental awareness of youth, especially women, and engaging the public and private sector in Samoa's first Carbon Offset program.



"The young men and women will work closely with Forestry experts from MNRE and with Samoa Conservation Society to improve their skills and knowledge of forest management and conservation in general" said Christine Tuioti, Project Manager for C-offset."

By December 2018, 10,400 trees had been planted by the youth and almost 4 ha of degraded forest had been restored. Once mature these trees will absorb more than 2,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide making a significant contribution to Samoa's efforts to combat climate change. Nine of the 30 champions are females highlighting the important role of women in the fight against climate change. The 30 Participants were engaged for a total of 50 days, including participating in a comprehensive environmental awareness course where they learnt different ways in which they can help win the fight against climate change and become better environmental stewards.



An important part of the project is raising awareness of the impacts of everyone's behaviour on the planet- in particular how our use of fossil fuels is contributing to climate change. Every time we travel by car or plane, or even turn on the lights at home, we are contributing to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide emissions from international travel is increasing fast. However, trees are excellent carbon sinks and planting trees is a good way to combat climate change. If you fly but are keen to plant trees to offset your emissions, this is called a "carbon offset" and offsets are now a major tool used globally in the fight against climate change.

All the youth made a "personal pledge" to do something for the environment such as not to burn waste, to cut down on the use of plastics, to set up or help manage a village fisheries reserve, to not shoot bats or to plant more native trees. We consider these youth, true "environmental champions", and SCS and MNRE plan to continue their engagement with the 30 youth champions in 2019. We encourage everyone think about their environmental and carbon footprint and to play their role in reducing, or offsetting, their footprint.



"The C-Offset project not only helps people to offset their carbon pollution, it also helps restore our degraded forests and improves native biodiversity in general" said James Atherton, President of the Samoa Conservation Society."

Our logo tells a compelling story...

Numerous Samoan legends and proverbial sayings relate to wildlife and to the natural world and for millenia Samoans have lived in close harmony with nature whose bounty has sustained us.

On the right side of the logo we have a nody (gogo) flying confidently over the clear blue sea (moana). Samoan fishermen traditionally follow flocks of gogo to find fish as well as to find their way home when they are far from land.



The nody and other sea birds also bring the fertility of the ocean to the land by fertilizing the forests. The banyan tree (aoa) and its roots on the left represent the green forests and land of Samoa and all the plants that are important in Samoan culture. The massive aoa itself is a "tree of life" - a host to a myriad other species of plants and animals including food and habitat for our native birds, flying foxes, reptiles and insects. Underneath, and cradling the biodiversity, we have a thin strip that includes traditional symbols from the Samoan tattoo (tatau)- one of Samoa's great cultural icons.

The tatau symbols come from nature, just as Samoan culture evolved from nature. The triangular shaped zigzag design at the bottom depicts the sharp edges of the pandanus (fala) leaf used for mats and other traditional handicrafts. The square shaped symbols above depict the suckers of the octopus (fe'e), a favourite food of Samoans. Finally, we have the symbol of the gogo again, this time flying towards the ocean in-between the pandanus and the octopus. We have now completed the circle of life and demonstrated the intimacy of land, sea, animals, plants and people...We as Samoans need to continue to respect nature for we come from nature and we are part of nature. Our culture and way of life can only survive and flourish if we show more love (alofa) for the natural world that we are indivisibly part of.

*The logo was designed by one of our members: Makiko Sherley

Samoan proverbs



From "The rainforests and the flying foxes" Fa'asao Savaii, 1998:

"E mu'a le vao" : The forest is young, used by a young person to excuse his mistakes committed through inexperience

"Ua fa'aafo e gata" : It is the threat of the snake. As the only snake in Samoa is harmless this refers to the things that look threatening but do not represent any danger

"Aua ne'i popona le toa i lou finagalo" : May your mind be without knots like the "toa" (Casuarina) tree. This speech can only cause anger

About us

The Samoa Conservation Society is a young Samoan NGO committed to advancing the conservation of Samoa's biodiversity and natural heritage. Although it was established as a society in 2013, SCS's official launch took place during the Environment Week 2014. The organization's mission is to promote the conservation of Samoa's biodiversity and natural heritage by increasing the awareness of the threats to native biodiversity from invasive species, unsustainable harvesting, habitat destruction and degradation, pollution, and climate change. Our efforts will be achieved by working alongside partners and local communities to undertake research, raise awareness, and by conducting education and information exchange programmes. Our projects range from species conservation, forest conservation and restoration, invasive species management and environmental awareness and outreach. In 2016 the Society launched Samoa's first Carbon Offset Project dedicated to funding rainforest restoration from carbon offsets.

Our work aims to inspire all Samoans to become greener citizens and to take responsibility for our environment and biodiversity. If you, or your office, are interested in offsetting your carbon emissions, or have an environmental project in mind, please contact us, we are keen to support you.



The SCS Executive Committee and office wishes all our members, Green partners, friends and family a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!



We thank our partners for their support!



Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
Matagaluega o le Puna'oa
Faalenatura ma Siosiomaga



Newsletter

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