



PANSIPIT RIVER CLEARED FROM FISH CAGES/FISHPENS

DENR CALABARZON REGION

After a series of Inter-Agency meetings between the Provincial Government of Batangas led by no less than Honorable Governor Vilma Santos Recto and Officials of DENR CALABARZON Region including members of the Protected Area Management Board of Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (PAMB-TVPL) Pansipit River is now free from fish cages/fishpens and other aquaculture structures.



Fish cage Dismantling Dialogue between Inter-Agency Task Force on Environmental Law Enforcement in TVPL and Fish cage Owners

Pansipit river is the only outlet of water from Taal Lake to Balayan Bay and vice-versa. The illegal construction and establishment of the fish cages/pens and other aquaculture structures along the river hinder the free-flow of water between the lake and the Bay. This resulted to deterioration of fish habitat and the water quality and prevented the migration of fish between the two water bodies. Incidences of fish kills were observed more frequent last year and during the year compared to previous years, a manifestation that the water quality in the lake has deteriorated. This prompted the Provincial Governor of Batangas, after consultation with concerned PAMB members of TVPL to issue Executive Order No. 04-2008 dated June 3, 2008. The said Executive Order created an INTER AGENCY TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN TVPL composed of representatives from Provincial Administrator's Office, PENR and CENR Offices of Batangas, PASu of TVPL, BFAR, Municipal/City Mayors within TVPL, KMMLT, Batangas Police Provincial Office (BPPO), PMG/PCG, PAF, PG-ENRO, Provincial Legal/Tourism/Information Offices, PPDO and PCDO. The Task Force is headed by the

Provincial Administrator Victor Reyes and the Protected Area Superintendent (PASu) of TVPL OIC-CENRO Laudemir Salac as the Vice-Chief. The Task Force was empowered to enforce all ENR and Fishery laws, rules and regulations within TVPL including the provisions of Coconut Conservation Act.

The initial dismantling of fish cages along Pansipit River, particularly in the municipalities of San Nicolas and Agoncillo, started last June 21, 2008, which coincides with the celebration of Philippine Independence Day. After a short program/ceremony held at the covered court of San Nicolas, Batangas, Honorable Governor Vilma Santos Recto led the actual dismantling assisted by Provincial Administrator Victor Reyes in his capacity as the Head of the Task and CENRO Laudemir Salac, who is also the concurrent PASu of TVPL and the Vice-Chief of the Task Force. The Task Force was given until July 31, 2008 to clear the river from any fish cages/pens and other aquaculture structure.



Clockwise: Hon. Vilma Santos- Recto personally witness the clearing operation of Pansipit River; CENRO Salac and concurrent PASu of TVPL also witness the dismantling activity; Volunteers/participants conduct dismantling of illegal fish cages.

Based on the physical inventory conducted by CENRO Calaca on November 2007, the total of 164 fish cages were accounted along the river. However, prior to the ceremonial dismantling on June 12, 2008, after a dialogue conducted by the Task Force, some o the fish cage owners/operators voluntarily dismantled their fish cages thereby the total number was reduced to 96 fish cages.



DENR personnel and the Kapisanan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda ng Taal are briefed by Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PGENRO) L. Awitan regarding the day's clearing operations.



DENR Batangas personnel, with the participation of LGUs and POs, dismantle remaining illegal fish cages along Pansipit River.

The earlier pronouncement of the Secretary that Pansipit River must be cleared of all fish cages has materialized when the Task Force reported that as of July 31, 2008 they have dismantled all fish cages along the Pansipit River .