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Environment

Week ending Wednesday, 7 September, 2011

In this section we present stories on the environment. From global issues such as climate change, to local issues such as renewable energy and the state of our lagoon; Cook Islands News endeavors to be at the forefront of the fight to protect our land and waters by bringing our readers the latest news and veivs.

First raii signs up in Muri

Tue
6 Sep

A number of new raii signs have been put up in the Muri area, the first tapere at Rarotonga to do so.

Last week, members of the Koutu Nui and local accommodation owners took part in an official blessing ceremony as the raii sign was put in place on Muri beach alongside Pacific Resort Rarotonga.

The ceremony also marked the first year of the area being protected under the raii, a traditional conservation system part of an initiative to protect the areas marine life.

Large areas of Rarotonga are already in raii zones, where a complete ban on fishing is enforced by the traditional leaders of the community.

The Muri Raii will be in effect for a period of 10 years, with one year of that already passed.

Last weeks blessing was conducted by Pastor Nooana and attended by traditional leaders and community members including president of the House of Ariki, Travel Tou; president of the Koutu Nui Maria Henderson; Tupe Short, Tairiterangi Rangatira; Dorothy Nicholas, Uirangi Mataiapo; Keta Williams, Muri Pu Tapere; Mii Kauvai, chairperson of the Muri



The new ra'ui signs at Muri, the first location on Rarotonga to have them installed. 11090413

Environment Care Group; Greg Stanaway, chief executive officer of the Pacific Resort Hotel Group; and Thomas Koteka, general manager of Te Manava Luxury Villas and Spa.

The Koutu Nui, as part of their vision to protect the picturesque lagoon for future generations to enjoy, introduced this rauī. The Koutu Nui helped design the signs, which will be uniform across Rarotonga, with use of funding from the New Zealand Aid Programme.

The Muri lagoon marine environment was identified as a priority to conserve following confirmation by the Ministry of Marine Resources that shell fish, in particular ungakoa, paua and ariri, were slowly declining in numbers.

The Muri tapere is grateful for the funding received from Seacology to help with a community project namely renovation of their meeting house and clinic as well as community police office.

In exchange for funding, the Muri Tapere is committed to honouring the rauī in place.

Seacology is a non profit organisation based in California, United States, focusing on preserving island ecosystems and cultures around the globe. A representative from Seacology will be visiting Rarotonga on the September 9 to see this project in action.

■ Release / EP