

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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UPV Centennial Forest Project:

A Brief Update/Status

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Out of more than two thousand different trees planted (40 species) at the UPV Centennial Forest (Project CenFor) twenty months ago, around 50-60% remain standing and under threat due to inadequacy of water supply. Forty percent (40%) of mortality can be attributed to very poor soil condition, presence of weeds, unreliable peripheral fences and stray animals.

Measures to check these problems have been taken in coordination with the UPV Administration, Barangay Officials and animal owners. Solutions were short-lived and proved ineffective.

With the eminent danger of losing the Centennial Forest without a good fight, residents and local alumni Brods with some invited student organizations took all efforts to combat these problems. These were weeding and mulching, dung fertilizing and even utilizing empty mineral water as 'catheter' for watering. This collective action momentarily lessened the spread of dying trees not until the onslaught of dry season from September 2009 to present, making every tree cope for survival.

Last February 14, 2010, the UP Beta Sigma Fraternity International granted the second tranche of US\$500 through Brod Rene de Rueda as part of the commitment to support UPV Brods nurture the Centennial Forest Project. Much of this amount was used to procure and install a watering system right at the very core of the Centennial Forest site. This was implemented after three weeks of arduous negotiations with the UPV Administration to build such facility.

At present, the resident Brods, some with their friends and 'loved ones' are watering the trees whereby every resident Brod was assigned to a specific area in this project. The watering consumed at least two (2) hours which is much easier and efficient. Some of the Iloilo-based alumni Brods are also helping in watering the trees during weekends.

For almost a month, most trees showed remarkable development. New leaves sprouted while yellowish ones turning green. Although some of the trees were unable to recuperate due to intense heat of the blazing sun. Replacement of dead seedlings will be this coming rainy season. Individual tree guards are being prepared instead of peripheral fence which is easily infested by termites. Planting bamboos or 'madre de cacao' around the area is also considered an

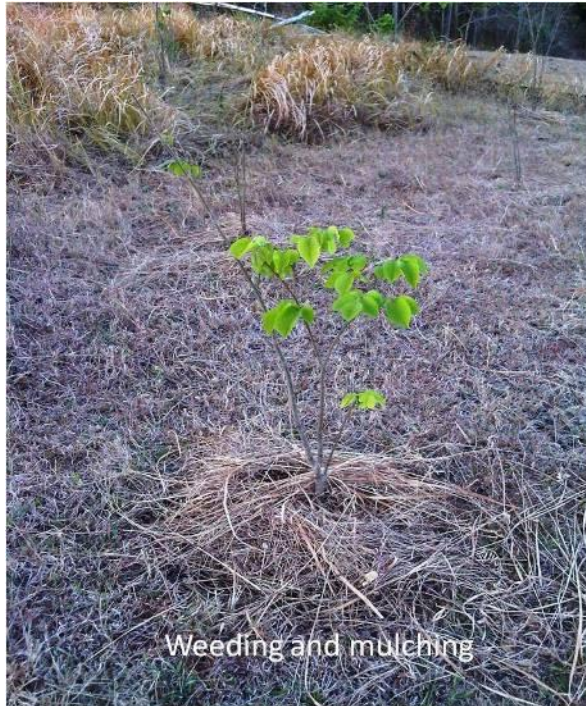
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Reforestation is not as simple as it looks. And so goes the experience of the UP-Visayas Centennial Forest Project based in Miag-ao, Iloilo. With our UP Visayas alumni and resident Brods at the forefront, the Project was inaugurated in 2007 with lots of optimism that enjoyed the support of the local community and some financial help from our UPBSFI, Inc. in the amount of \$1,000 to be given in two tranches of \$500. Originally, UPBSFI's second tranche was intended to expand the project by another hectare. The project however was not spared from criticism even from the doomsayers of the local community. As our project consultant Usec Rene de Rueda mentioned in his December 2008 article (this publication) "... one possible reason was the three failed attempts to reforest the project site through tree planting. In retrospect, the prime movers of those previous activities failed to recognize that successful reforestation is not a one-time affair of planting seedlings, but involves lots of continuing maintenance and protection..."

This article from Brod Joel Artajo shows the validity of Brod Rene's statement, and the UP Visayas Brods are doing their very best to "save" this award-winning project.

option to replace the destroyed fences. Furthermore, a 'bahay kubo' is targeted for construction including branching pipelines with faucets.

Another serious problem is expected this summer break because only Brod Tauí and Brod Yuls will be left behind to perform the watering chore of the entire site aside from the fact that there will be a longer summer coming. In addition, water supply itself is now rationed by the UPV Administration from 7:30am until 7:00pm until the summer ends. Water consumption to date is 10 cu.m





Installation of faucet



- Installation of a catheter watering system



Water hose installed around the site



Water meter installation