

**Closing Report for 2019 “Heritage Communities are Healthy Communities”
(HCHC) Project
July 1, 2019**

Heritage Communities are Healthy Communities, a pilot project funded by TakeCare Foundation, concluded its 10-day trail-making activity at Guam Preservation Trust’s (GPT) Atantano property in Piti. The goal of the project was to increase the knowledge and appreciation of Guam’s outdoor cultural, historical, and natural, traditional, and healthy values. The objective was to create conservation and preservation activities in historic preservation, natural resources, CHamoru culture, and health and wellness.

From June 17, 2019 to June 28, 2019, six participants and four GPT staff completed about 600m of natural hiking trail parallel to the Atantano River. In addition, to the trail-making activity, local experts from a range of disciplines visited Atantano to expound on the cultural and natural resources of the property. The 10-day activity was filled with educational talks, hikes, and field trips. The following is a brief summary of the daily activities:



Day 1 (June 17, 2019) – *Heritage Communities are Healthy Communities* project begins with an introduction and orientation of GPT’s Atantano property. Health specialist Ernest Aquino and health educator Cassandra Castro from TakeCare Wellness presented the four aspects of living healthy: being active, eating right, being socially connected, and finding relaxation. They also conducted a health

screening that included BMI, weight, and fat and muscle percentages for participants and GPT staff.

Day 2 (June 18, 2019) – First field day in Atantano with Else Demeulenaere, plant specialist and associate director of the Center for Island Sustainability at the University of Guam. The participants learned about native, endemic, and invasive plants, including edible and medicinal types. They also learned how invasive and native/endemic plants fit in the overall conservation plan of the



property.



Day 3 and 5 (June 19 and 21, 2019) – Both days were dedicated to trail-making; clearing more vegetation and widening the path.

Day 4 (June 20, 2019) – The group took a break from trail work and spent the day with the superintendent of the National Park Service, Barbara Alberti, at Asan Beach Park and T. Stell Newman visitor center to talk about the planning and management of trails and signage in the national park system. Trails are another way to help tell the story of a place. They can also highlight what plants can be used for food and



medicine. It also is a great way to get some exercise and relaxation! Participants visited the War in the Pacific Historical Park to learn about management and foundation documents and how items like way finding signage and brochures can help enhance the experience for those on the trail.

in Atantano to continue trail work and to hear about ridge-to-reef conservation and reforestation from cooperative fire program manager Christine Fejeran from the Guam



Day 6 (June 24, 2019) – Back ridge-to-reef conservation and forestry and soil resources division. GPT is fortunate that the Atantano River flows through the preserve. It is, however, in an area that is prone to fires which threaten the water quality of the river.

Day 7 (June 25, 2019) – The participants spent the morning with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Historian Malia Ramirez at Plaza de España to learn about the Hagatña Heritage Walking Trail. Malia discussed how the Hagatña Heritage Trail can teach about the periods of Guam's history from pre-contact to our contemporary times. The trail tells the story and offers a particular sense of place. We also learned how trees can also be seen as historical. Atantano is a much less known area but with this in mind, we hope those who enter the trail can with their senses understand our soon-to-be-mapped-out cultural and natural significant sites.



Back in Atantano, Brent Tibbats from the Guam Department of Agriculture, Aquatic and Wildlife Resources division, talked more about the Atantano River and its ecosystem. To help protect aquatic/fish species, we also need to be aware of the opposite concepts of reef to ridge and help those fishes return up the stream to lay their eggs. We need to continue protecting the Atantano River and much work needs to be

done to stabilize its banks and we would like as much to use native plants.

Day 8 (June 26, 2019) – Archaeologist Darlene Moore from Micronesian Archaeological Research Services (MARS) visited Atantano and spoke about her archaeological survey of the property in 1994. In addition to observations by our eye, we look to tangible evidence of what was left behind, and through the evidence we understand that Atantano, which is more inland, was inhabited around 1600 AD. Contrast that to other Guam coastal settlements that were



inhabited around 1500 BC. Atantano also has evidence of being used for rice cultivation and grazing in the Contact periods and the lands are so vast that it has a great potential to yield more information of our ancestors past activities. When our trail is complete, we hope that you walk in the footsteps of our ancestors and see what was special for them to spend their time there.

Day 9 (June 27, 2019) – The last day in the Atantano was dedicated to completing the trail, at least to the trail, where we last marked off. DPR Historian Malia Ramirez once again joined us in Atantano to learn about the CHamoru cultural significance of places and place names. Participants were brought back to a time where the lanchu (ranch) life was an important cultural part of everyday life for CHamorus where ranching, farming, and amot (medicine) harvesting took place. This project gave our participants a unique opportunity to get in touch with the land again and at the end, a trip to the ridge gave the greater view of the land.



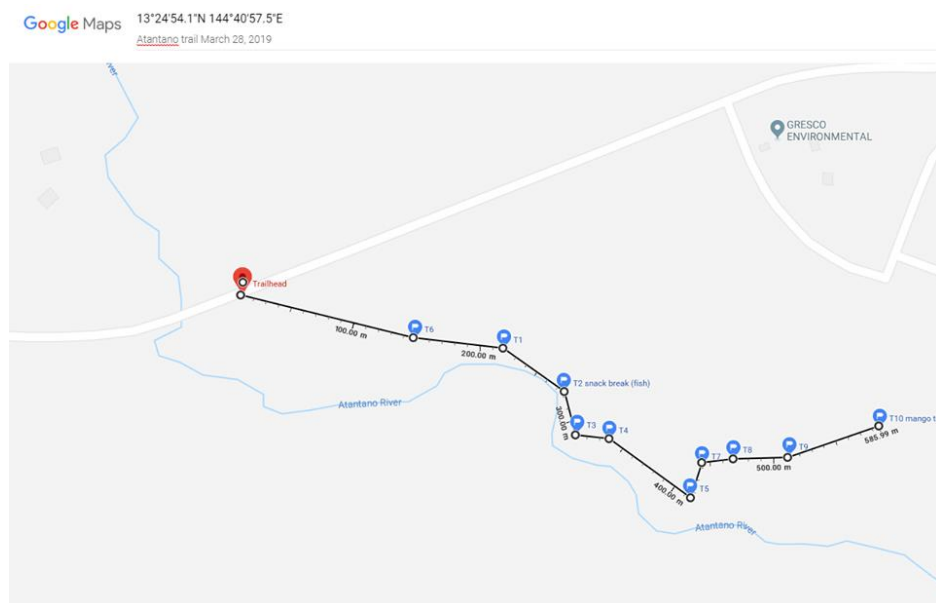
Day 10 (June 28, 2019) – Participants regrouped to evaluate the overall experience and this time heard from their point of views. They appreciated the community aspect of the project. Others appreciated the outside learning opportunity that incorporates traditional CHamoru values and advocated for more programs that provide a physical connection to the land. We also brought back TakeCare Wellness staff Cassandra Castro and Ernest Aquino to see how we fared physically... safe to say that we are getting on that right path to living healthy!



Figure 1. HCHC participants, TakeCare Wellness health specialists, and GPT Staff with Chief Program Officer Joe Quinata and GPT Board Chairman Michael Makio

Evaluation results

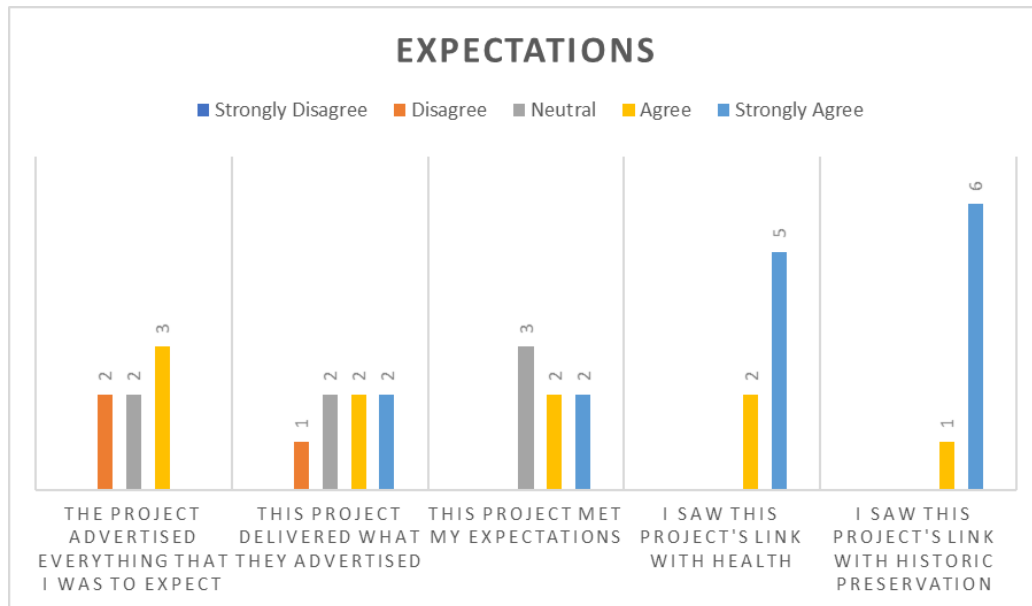
The HCHC program was Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 12:00 noon. Depending on the speaker, almost all of the activities were spent outdoors. The project required a bit of physical exertion, which included hiking and vegetation clearing. The project was able to complete the marked trail, which was about 600m from the trail head.



For the evaluation, we asked participants for their opinions regarding GPT’s plan to develop Atantano into a Heritage Preserve, their perspectives on preservation and conservation in Atantano, and their overall experience of the project. For a pilot project, the results were positive, and we plan to carry on this outlook as we continue to blaze through the trail further into the property. Some of the comments from the survey:

- “I loved everything you all planned and did. Nothing ever felt rushed. It was well paced. Everyone that worked with us was amazing.”

- “Thank you all for your openness and allowing us to join you on this Atantano journey. On the last couple of days, I looked at the land and was excited for its future.”
- “Thank you for opening up Atantano to us and I am thankful for being a part of a bigger movement!”
- “Thank you so much for this opportunity to learn and incorporate health with heritage in this project. I see it is a need and I’m so glad that you are doing this for the community.”



We also recognize areas of the HCHC project that need improvement. Participants suggest:

- Advertising to more people and at an earlier time
- Opening tours for the youth: “less machetes; more speakers. Important for younger generation to learn and connect”
- Documenting the process in different formats: video, writing, plant species records, photographs, oral histories
- Demonstrating and promoting traditional cultural practices in Atantano
- Developing outside or “open-air” classrooms
- Reintroducing the CHamoru lunar calendar in Atantano
- Keeping the trail natural

Conclusion

Historic preservation in Guam is more than just the built or natural environment, it is also about building a better quality of life for the island community. Atantano provides an opportunity to reintroduce and harness various public interests, whether it be for culture, nature, history, or health. *Heritage Communities are Healthy Communities* project is just the beginning, and we hope TakeCare Foundation continues to support our causes. Si Yu'os Ma'åse.

