

Site Nomination for Peat Site Profiles in Southeast Asia	
Category:	Best Management Practices Site (BMP)
Name of Site:	Leyte Sab-a Basin
Country:	Philippines
GPS Point:	Latitude: N11.23234 Longitude: E124.90932
Location & Access:	<p>The Leyte Sab-a Basin is located in the three barangays of the municipality of Alang-Alang, Leyte, namely: Brgy. Langit, Brgy. Divisoria, Brgy. Tabangohay, and in Brgy. San Isidro, municipality of Sta. Fe, Leyte. It is located along the edges of the Mainit River Irrigation System.</p> <p>Presence of circumferential road facilitates travel to the area.</p>
Total Area:	3088.00 hectare(s)
Background of Site:	<p>The Leyte Sab-a Basin is an elongated basin aligned NW-SE situated in the northeast of the island of Leyte, close to Tacloban City. The extreme north west of the basin is somewhat isolated from the main basin by a ridge running south into the basin. Peat (Dolongan peat) is mainly found in the central part of the basin away from the ridges surrounding it. Around the margins of the basin, the Dolongan soil/peat mix is found, presumably since erosion from the surrounding ridges has deposited mineral soil at the foot of the ridges. It is probable that peat and mineral soil are inter-bedded in these areas. Palo clay/loam is mainly found in the western part of the basin.</p> <p>The Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland has a total area of 3,088 hectares, of which more than half has been reclaimed for agriculture. The remaining unutilized peatland of 1,288 hectares in the eastern part of the basin consists of small remnant areas of swamp forest and sedge/grass peat swamp.</p> <p>The basin was the focus of the BANCOM agricultural development project in the 1970s and 80s. However, the attempts at converting peat areas to rice land failed, resulting in extensive areas of degraded peatland covered by grasses and sedges.</p>
Significant Value of Site:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity - Hydrology - Soil/Carbon - Socio-economic <p>Notes:</p> <p>The Sab-a swamp/marshland is composed of a series or system of swamps exhibiting varied and unique landscape features. It has an estimated area of 3,088 hectares considered as the largest water catchment area in Leyte (Haribon Foundation, 1988) receiving water from various sources (springs, rivers, aquifers, and rainfall) in all direction.</p> <p>The area regularly supports large numbers of waterfowl, particularly herons and egrets (Ardeidae), ducks (Anatidae), rails and gallinules (Rallidae), and some shorebirds.</p>
Designated use (status/legal classification):	- Watershed/Water Catchment
Major Issues:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction of drainage in the 1970s and 80s has led to shrinkage and oxidation of the peat with the result that the land surface has fallen. This may have led to the observed persistent flooding during November and December. 2. The Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland is threatened with degradation. Today, most of the areas are disturbed for agriculture. 3. The Leyte Sab-a Basin Development Authority (LSBDA) transferred about 1, 209 hectares to Dept. of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in 1976 as resettlement areas and farm lots for distribution to beneficiaries under the project. In 1991, Executive Order 465 was issued by the President placing LSBDA under the supervision and control of the Board of Liquidators (BOL). The BOL executed a Memorandum of Agreement with DAR authorizing the agency to take physical possession of the lands transferred by LSBDA and distribute them to settlers or agrarian reform beneficiaries. <p>In addition, all LSBDA lands suitable for agriculture were surrendered to DAR under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. The exact area of land turned over to DAR is not certain. Until today, there are conflicting claims between LSBDA and private entities claiming ownership of parcels of lands under the jurisdiction. In the absence of clear delineation and</p>

	map of the Sab-a Basin special patent, the lands distributed cannot be determined with certainty (ADB Report).
Site Jurisdiction & Administration:	Based on the DENR Land Classification Map, 76% of the Sab-a is already Alienable & Disposable (A & D) land and only 24% remains classified as public land.
Peatland Type:	Lowland
Management activities:	<p>a) Past</p> <p>1. In 1970's the government has initiated the BANCOC Farm Services Corporation Project funded by the National Food Authority and Philippine Coconut Authority to, among others, drain the swamps and marshlands for agricultural development along with provisions of land ownership. With limited awareness and knowledge of the significance of wetland areas, local inhabitants largely look at them as wastelands, and idle resources that could otherwise become productive if converted to agriculture. From the development of the BANCOC Farm Services Corporation Project, it was later subsumed by the LSBDA created under Presidential Decree No. 625 on December 26, 1974. The area coverage of LSBDA was estimated at around 88,000 hectares including some 23,302 hectares of private property. Area jurisdiction encompasses 7 municipalities namely, Alang-Alang, Palo, Barugo, San Miguel, Sta. Fe, Babatngon, and Jaro. The provincial government of Leyte was the executing office with the support of the Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>2. Through the Asian Development Bank- Technical Assistance for Environmental Evaluation of Swamps and Marshlands (TA No. 2385-PHI), the Orient Integrated Development Consultants, Inc. in association with the ENR Consultants, Inc. undertook an environmental evaluation of swamps and marshlands of the ADB- funded Second Irrigation Systems Improvement Project (ISIP II, or the Project in Leyte). The primary purpose of the advisory TA is to determine the optimal land use of the swamps and marshlands in and around the Project area, considering the impact of the proposed land use on wildlife, natural habitats and public health. The outcome of the TA is the identification of the recommended land use options for the swamps and marshlands, monitoring programs needed to achieve environmental objectives.</p> <p>b) Current</p> <p>Close coordination with the Municipal Local Government Units of Alang-alang, Leyte and Sta. Fe, Leyte for local counterpart in the IFAD-GEF Peatland Rehabilitation Project.</p> <p>Awareness and Capacity Building:</p> <p>1. Lectures and presentation on peatland are conducted for government agencies, local government units and civil society. The Local Technical Working Group of Leyte Sab-a Pilot site holds community assemblies and dialogues to increase the level of awareness on peatlands in the communities.</p> <p>2. Information Sharing – Initially downloaded information materials in the PAWB website and the Clearing House Mechanism for the Philippine Biodiversity</p> <p>3. Press Release</p> <p>c) Potential</p> <p>1. Rehabilitation of the area for two purposes: ? To replant areas to suitable crops for local people ? To restore the natural vegetation in some areas</p> <p>2. Livelihood options - Suitable species that could be planted in the abandoned areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lumbia (sago / Metroxylon sp) • Tikog (Fimbristylus sp) • Gabi / Taro (Colocasia spp) and other root crops • Lanipao (Terminalia copelandii) <p>If gravity drainage of the peat area is possible, several pilot projects could be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plantations of Lanipao: Local people use lanipao both for fuel wood and for house construction. Suitable areas for such plantations should be identified. Nurseries need to be developed, together with seed collection and propagation techniques. It would be best for the nurseries to be community-based, ideally at local schools. Experimental work on propagation of lanipao could be undertaken at the Agricultural Training Center (ATC). • Local people say that sago was much more common in the peat area before the BANCOC scheme cleared the area for rice cultivation. Sago can be used both for its starch and for thatch. Again, suitable areas can be planted to sago and techniques for successful sago culture can be transferred from other ASEAN countries (through the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project) where sago is an important crop; e.g. Sarawak in Malaysia. • Tikog (Fimbristylus sp, a sedge) is presently used for handicrafts. Natural areas of

	<p>Tikog are harvested for this purpose. It would be desirable to propagate Tikog to ensure continuity of supplies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The starchy tubers of plants such as gabi, taro and palawan are used as food. Palawan especially seems to grow naturally in the peat area. Although it takes a long time to mature, its planting could provide an emergency food crop in times of shortage <p>3. Canal blocking</p>
<p>Facilities & Activities Available on Site:</p>	
<p>Institution Responsible for the Site:</p>	<p>Name of Organization: Protected Area & Wildlife Bureau</p> <p>Postal Address: Ninoy Aquino Park & Wildlife Center North Ave., Elliptical Road Diliman, Quezon City</p> <p>Phone: +6329258950</p> <p>Fax: +6329258950</p> <p>Website: www.pawb.gov.ph</p>
<p>Nominated by:</p>	<p>Name: Armida P. Andres</p> <p>Organization: DENR-PAWB</p>