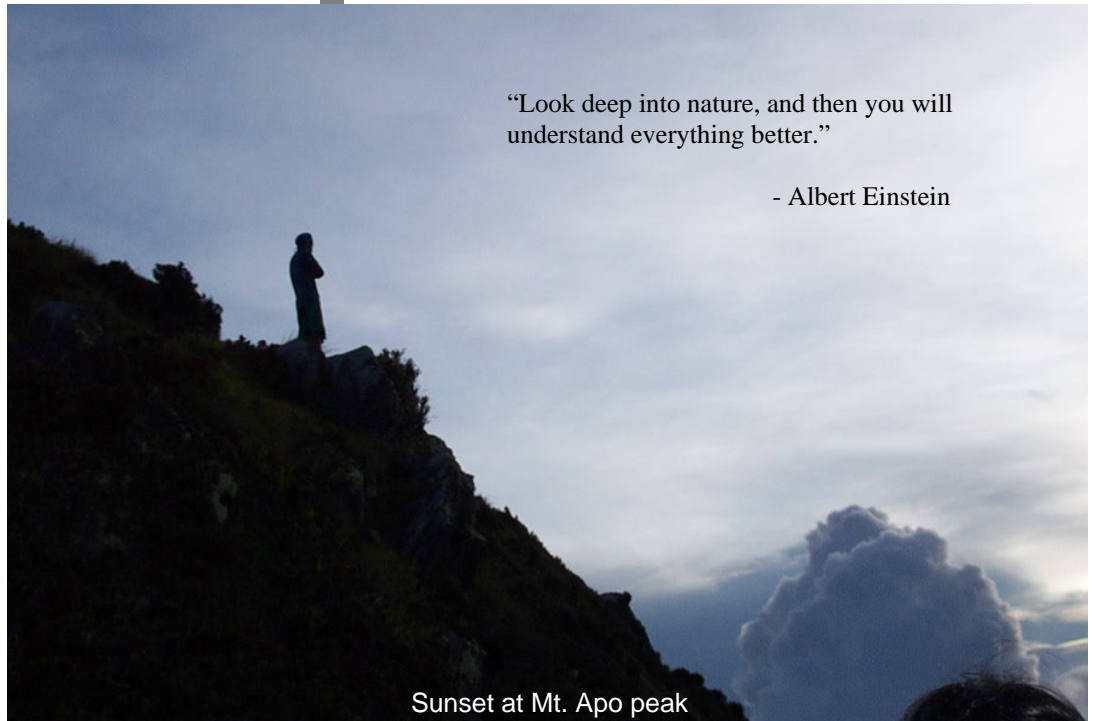


SUMMARY REPORT

of the Mt. Apo assessment climb
conducted on May 7-8, 2004



Assessment climb participants: Ernesto Gamela Jr., Clerk I, Kidapawan City Environment and Natural Resource Office; Pio Pailan, Forest, Ranger, DENR PAWD, Region XI; Efraim Calma, Ecosystems Management Specialist II, DENR PAWD Region XI; John Largo, Human Development International; Edgar Aquiatan, Program Implementation Officer, Mount Apo Foundation, Inc.; Charlie Palo, FLUP Representative, Metro Kidapawan Water District; and Ermelo N. Libre, Executive Director of Mount Apo Foundation, Inc.

Summary Report prepared by Atty. Ermelo N. Libre. Documentation photographs and digital pictures taken by Edgar Aquiatan. Summary report printing courtesy of Mt. Apo Foundation, Inc.

Summary report submitted to Mt. Apo Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) on May 20, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION CLIMB

The evaluation climb to the Mt. Apo peak and Venado Lake was conducted last May 6-7, 2004 as part of the regular monitoring activity of MANP-PAMB. The climb was authorized by DENR-PAMB through Permit No. 2004-01 issued on May 5, 2004 by Loenilo R. Rivera, Chief of Protected Areas and Wildlife Division of DENR Region XI.

The evaluation climb was also conducted to verify reports of massive influx of climbers in Mt. Apo during the holy week period of April 2004 and document its effects to the converging areas at Venado Lake and the peak of Mt. Apo.

The members of the evaluation team are Ernesto Gamela Jr., Clerk 1, Kidapawan City Environment and Natural Resource Office, Pio Pailan, Forest, Ranger, PAWD DENR Region XI, Efraim Calma, Ecosystems Management Specialist II, PAWD DENR Region XI, John Largo, Human Development International, Edgar Aquiatan, Program Implementation Officer, Mount Apo Foundation, Inc., Charlie Palo, FLUP Representative, Metro Kidapawan Water District and Ermelo N. Libre, Executive Director of Mount Apo Foundation, Inc.

BOX 1 – Evaluation Climb Itinerary		
Location	Arrival Time	Start Time
Poblacion, Kidapawan	07:00 AM May 6	08:00 AM May 6
Site G of PNOC	09:30 AM May 6	10:12 AM May 6
Trail Hut rest area	10:30 AM May 6	10:35 AM May 6
Trail spring area	10:44 AM May 6	10:47 AM May 6
Foothill	10:52 AM May 6	10:54 AM May 6
Hilltop	11:45 AM May 6	11:47 AM May 6
PNOC bunkhouse	12:06 PM May 6	01:45 PM May 6
Foot of peak	02:55 PM May 6	03:05 PM May 6
Mt. Apo peak	04:50 PM May 6	09:25 AM May 7
Lake Venado	10:35 AM May 7	01:30 PM May 7
Marbel River	03:30 PM May 7	03:40 PM May 7
Site H PNOC	04:00 PM May 7	05:00 PM May 7
Poblacion, Kidapawan	05:45 PM May 7	

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The observations and findings listed below are based on a consolidated assessment of the members of the evaluation team. Some information are sourced from interviews of porters, local residents and security personnel along the entry points. Additional data were supplied by the DENR XII-CENRO 4-B office at Kidapawan City.

1. The Kapatagan entry point in Digos City is an open trail for Mt. Apo climbers. Twenty five (25) climbers were directly observed climbing the Mt. Apo peak from Venado on May 7, 2004 at 10:05 o'clock in the morning. They used the Kapatagan entry point. (See their names in Box 3)



Huge pile of garbage at the peak of Mt. Apo. This area before is 100% free of non-biodegradable materials.

2. There is kaingin activity going on at the east portion of Mt. Zion. (As reported by a PNOC forester)
3. Forest fire occurred sometime during the last week of April 2004 at the southwest portion of Lake Venado. Burned area more or less 3,000 square meters.
4. Peak and venado lake areas littered with garbage. Some garbage were burned. There are undisposed piles of empty bottles (alcoholic drinks, cooking oil, medicines, etc), used tin cans (food stuffs, drinks, fuel supply, etc), water plastic containers, assorted foil wrappers and cellophanes.
5. Occurrence of bonfires and fire-making (for cooking and heating) using woods increased tremendously at the peak and venado lake camping area.
6. Additional stone writings at the peak area and along the venado-peak trail were observed. (See samples of stonewritings in Box 2)
7. During the April 2004 holy week period, around 300 persons, who used the the Davao side entry points, climb down from Venado using the closed Venado-Mainit-Mandarangan trail at Ilomavis Kidapawan side of Mt. Apo and 80 to 100 persons climb down through PNOC route. Another more or less 150 persons used the Mandarangan-Mainit-Venado trail, despite its closure status, to climb Mt. Apo. Around 100 climbers were able to climb clandestinely to Venado using new alternate routes. (Data supplied by PNOC security officers)



Remains of fire burning at the peak. Dangerous practice that invites forest fire.



Stonewritings along venado-peak trail. When will they learn?



One of the many garbage stockpiles scattered around Venado lake area. The dirty problem of 2000 is back again!

8. DENR XII-CENRO 4-B monitoring team recorded 37 Apo climbers who backtrailed to Bongolanon in Magpet and another 23 climbers went down to Ilomavis in Kidapawan. These climbers used the Davao side entry points. Climbers revealed that P100 per climber was collected at the entry point. No official receipts were issued.

9. There is insufficient DENR logistical support to personnel assigned in MANP-related activities. This adversely affects the effectiveness and efficiency of performance of their duties and responsibilities; (This is a recurring personal observation of Atty. Ermelo N. Libre)

10. An estimated 1,300 climbers converged at Venado lake and the peak of Mt. Apo during the holy week period last April 2004. (As reported by Ed Piastro,, EMS 1, PAWS, CENRO 4-B)



Leftover of a bonfire at Venado lake. Fire-burning activities indiscriminately conducted around the area. Is this allowed?



week at the southwest portion of Venado lake. Who dunnit?

BOX 2 – What’s in a name?

Why do people scribble names and writings on stones and precious rock formation? Is it for pride? Self-esteem? Sense of greatness? Or simple stupidity heightened by gross irresponsibility? Below are samples of stonewritings at the peak of Mt. Apo and along the Venado-peak trail.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|--------|
| Waray | Alfred | Jake | Albara |
| Alindo | Ken | Estrada | Tubog |
| Anton | Cabigas | Gutierrez | |
| New Bohol | L-boy | Elide | |
| Redentor | All | Fox | Romero |
| Jangoo | Banks | Edgar | |
| M Jerry | R Pambalan | | |
| Randy delos Reyes | Sdar | | |
| Advent Movement | Artieda | | |
| Bob | Totax | Rowena | Kawing |
| Elbert | Panabo | Dvo | |



Evaluation team members inspecting a fresh assorted garbage left by climbers. These climbers left the area 2 hours before the evaluation team arrived at Venado lake on May 7, 2004.

Evaluation team at Mt. Apo peak, May 7, 2004



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Regularize PAMB membership pursuant to RA 9237. Clarify and strengthen LGU and DENR commitment and support in PAMB policy directions concerning MANP.
2. Require all LGU CENROs, tourism officers, DENR CENROs/PENROs to climb Mt. Apo for actual first-hand experience of the situation and condition of the area;
3. Permanent forest rangers assigned to stay at Lake Venado whole year round to oversee and monitor the area. The forest rangers assigned must be assisted by local volunteers preferably coming from the community nearest to the area;

OTSQ-OTSQ QUESTIONS

1. What went wrong last April 2004 holy week?
 2. Where are the authorities mandated to enforce environmental laws and existing PAMB closure policy?
 3. Why are closed trails and routes used by climbers?
 4. How many climbers were given permits to climb and what route did they use?
 5. How much was the entrance/ climbing fee collected at the entry points? Who collected them?
 6. Who should take charge in addressing holistically the perennial problems during Mt. Apo climbing season?
 7. Is Mt. Apo Natural Park important to us? Do you believe that it is a home, a place of worship, a major watershed and a precious landmark?
 8. Can we unite all our good intentions for the future of MANP?
4. Review the effectiveness of the opening of Sta. Cruz trails and evaluate the Mt. Apo climbing policy and procedures of the municipality of Sta. Cruz. Determine whether or not the opening of Sta. Cruz trails be continued or stopped.
 5. The office of the Protected Area Superintendent must be strengthened with full time staff and personnel.
 6. PAMB must raise funds and identify fund sourcing mechanism. LGUs and private institutions around Mt. Apo must be encouraged to support the logistical needs of PAMB for effective MANP protection, conservation and development.
 7. The easy access by climbers of the Kapatagan entry point in Digos City and other entry points along the Davao side of Mt. Apo must be examined seriously. Remedial action must be done to address the weakness of policy enforcement in all entry points.

8. DENR/PAMB must initiate immediate conduct of a training workshop for the LGUs for the preparation of the Mt. Apo carrying capacity assessment. Training costs may be shared proportionately among participating LGUs. (As recommended by Edgar Paalan, CENRO of Kidapawan City)
9. DENR/PAMB to initiate formulation of forest land use plans to put in place on-site management of MANP. (As recommended by Edgar Paalan, CENRO of Kidapawan City)
10. Barangays with entry points to Mt. Apo must be empowered to support the protection and conservation of Mount Apo Natural Park.
11. Mountaineering clubs and organizations must be tapped to support the protection and conservation of Mount Apo Natural Park.
12. Mt. Apo-related tourism activities of Region XI and XII must be conducted in close coordination with Mt. Apo PAMB and must reinforce the protection and conservations efforts.
13. A coordinated multi-sectoral clean-up of lake Venado, the peak area and in all major Mt. Apo trails must be launched immediately to get rid of materials and debris harmful to animal and plant life.

**BOX 3 – CLIMBERS AT MT. APO PEAK
ON MAY 7, 2004**

Name	Address
1. Jonex Castillo	Torres St., Dvo City
2. John Wenda,	Garcia Heights, Bajada, Dvo City
3. France Pacheco	RPJ Exe.Homes, Matina Aplaya, Dvo City
4. Reynan Ostoryo	Del Carmen St., Dvo City
5. Juneil Tapay	Matina Aplaya, Dvo City
6. Jomendy Abrigana	Alpha Exe.Homes, Matina Aplaya, Dvo city
7. Jovy Galo, Nangkaan	Matina, Dvo City
8. Ruvie Manawatao	Nangkaan,Matina,Dvo City
9. Mark Jun Jovita,	Alpha St. Dvo city
10. Macdy Jovita	Alpha St. Dvo City
11. Emmanuel Cahiles	RPJ Exec.Homes, Matina Aplaya, Dvo City
12. Nathaniel Cahiles	RPJ Exec Homes, Matina Aplaya, Dvo City
13. Bruce Ureta	RPJ Exec Homes, Matina, Aplaya, Dvo City
14. Macky Pagala	RPJ Exec Homes, Matina, Aplaya, Dvo City
15. Lyn Siakor	Quarrio, Dvo City
16. Oliver Siakor	Quarrio, Dvo City
17. Jackilyn Pedrasa	Del Carmen St. Dvo City
18. Mary Grace Pasadan	Del Carmen St.Dvo City
19. Carlo Aguilon	Panacan Relocation,Dvo City
20. Michael Gamboa	RPJ Exec Homes,Matina, Aplaya, Dvo City
21. Nico Apostol	Norton St. Matina,Dvo City
22. Mico Paldebia	Balosong,Matina,Dvo City
23. Jericho Egay	Shanghai,Matina,Aplaya, Dvo City
24. Marvin Abapo	San Miguel,Matina,Dvo City
25. Jonathan Yoldi,	Teachers Village.Matina, Dvo City



Three of the many service vehicles of Mt. Apo climbers parked at Agco, Ilomavis, Kidapawan City on April 28, 2004.