

NAVY SPONSORS TWO ECOLOGICAL AREAS

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The Navy has scored another first — this time on Guam — and turned what could have been a negative situation into a model solution in protection of the environment.

The establishment of two Ecological Reserve Areas (ERAs) on Guam, one at Orote Peninsula and the other at Haputo, marks the first in the western Pacific under Navy sponsorship. And,

because very few ERAs have been established by the Navy, these two could serve as role models for the future.

Basically, the idea for the ERAs came about when the Navy decided to construct an ammunition wharf at Adotgan Point in Outer Apra Harbor, Guam. To do so, it would have to dredge the area, resulting in a loss of approximately 14 acres of prime coral

reef habitat.

As a way of compensation, the Navy proposed to set aside two areas totaling 115 acres as ERAs for the destruction of 14 acres of coral reef.

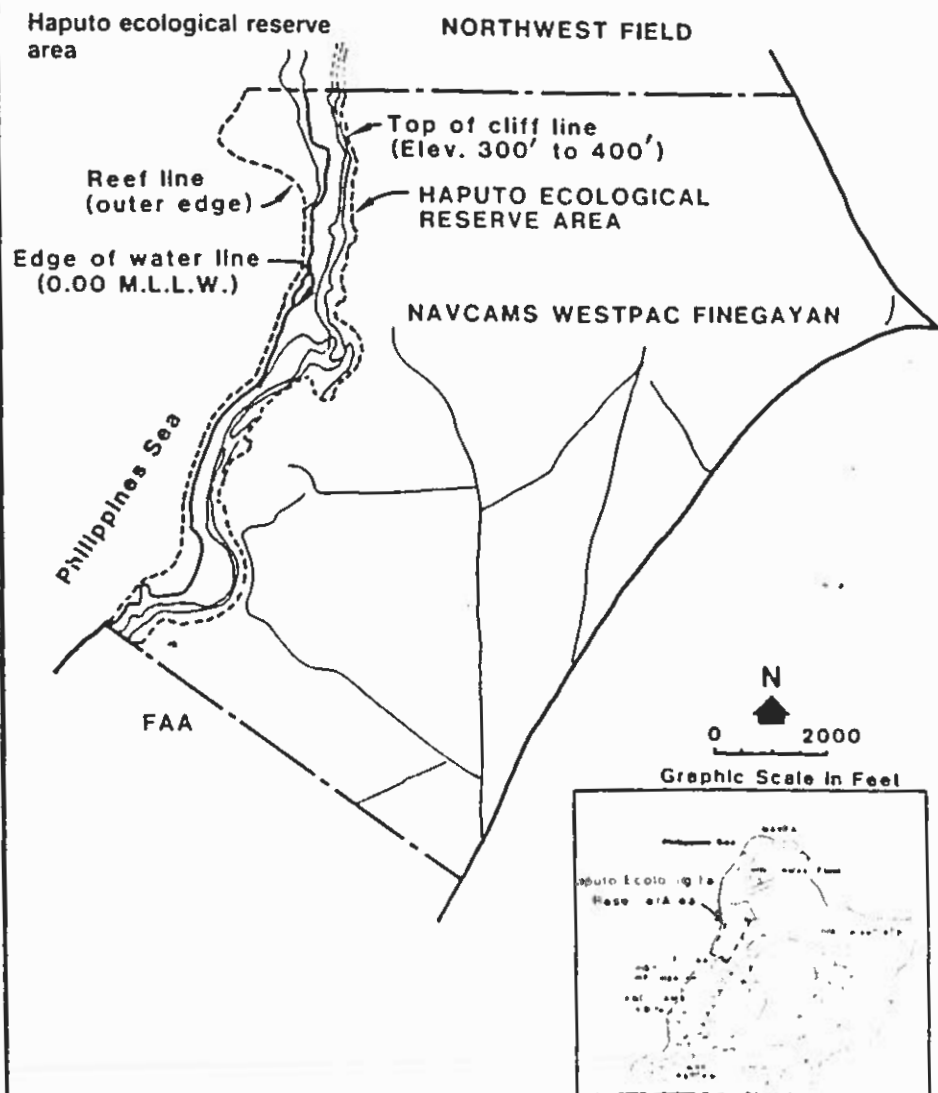
The Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Manual (OPNAVINST 5090.1 of 26 May 1983) was used to insure compliance with both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit. The Manual outlines steps to be taken to establish two types of reserves.

The first is the ERA, which is a physical or biological unit in which current natural conditions are maintained insofar as possible. The second is the Research Natural Area (RNA), wherein qualified researchers can measure the long-term ecological effects of human impact. Of the two types, the ERA was selected for use on Guam.

The cooperation of the U.S. Navy Station, Guam, for the Orote Peninsula ERA and the Naval Communication Area Master Station, Western Pacific (NAVCOMS WESTPAC) for the Haputo ERA made possible the agreement signed on September 9, 1983.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was published in the ammunition wharf's final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on December 30, 1983. It pledged the establishment of both ERAs. The MOU was signed by Guam Governor Regino J. Bordallo, Commander D. N. Hunter for COMNAV-MARIANAS, and NAVBASE Guam, and J. Paul B. Suter for the Guam Bureau of Planning.

The Haputo ERA, located at NAVCOMS WESTPAC Finegayan on the northwest coast of Guam, consists of 180 acres of cliff face and 72 acres of submarine and intertidal water areas. The



site, which contains two excavated pre-historic sites, one historic site and a limestone forest area, is habitat for the Guam rail, Micronesian kingfisher, and the Marianas fruit bat, each a Guam endangered species now proposed for the U.S. list. The Haputo and Double Reef areas are considered pristine marine environments.

The Orote Peninsula ERA, located on the southwestern side of Orote Peninsula, is on the opposite side from the proposed ammunition wharf. It includes 30 acres of steep cliff area and some 133 acres of submerged land and water area. The ERA stretches from Orote Point to a location opposite Lockwood Terrace at the base of the peninsula. As a manageable natural resource, these cliffs are to remain undeveloped as a habitat for birds. They will not be used for military purposes such as assault training.

The ERA plan was a viable solution to a controversy that had arisen from the Navy's choice of the Adotgan site over the Glass Breakwater site.

Three federal agencies, designated as "cooperating agencies" for early review of the EIS, argued that Glass Breakwater provided a viable alternative with minimum environmental impact. One agency threatened to appeal the decision; however, the government of Guam had already endorsed the Adotgan Point site and was anxious for construction to proceed. Construction would free Cabras Island from the hotel wharf explosives safety quantity distance and would encourage development.

In order to secure approval of the Adotgan Point site from the cooperating agencies, the Navy examined possibilities for mitigation/compensation for the damage to coral reefs and limestone forest. It developed a range of options, consulting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

With the acceptance of the Haputo and Orote Peninsula ERAs, the Navy provided a model solution in protection of the environment while permitting urgently needed construction.

The ERA establishment reports were prepared by the Pacific Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Pearl Harbor.



The Haputo ERA coastline.

