

Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape Endowment Fund



Photo Credit: MMPL PAMO

The MMPL Endowment Fund is a special initiative of the Board of Trustees of the Forest Foundation Philippines, in partnership with Conservation International, the MMPL Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and other stakeholders.

At 2,085 meters, Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape (MMPL) is the highest peak in the central spine of mountain ranges found in the South of Palawan. The largely forested mountain range covers several critical watersheds that are extremely valuable to the lowland agricultural economy of nearby areas.

The value of the mountain to Southern Palawan is undeniable. The indigenous peoples residing in or near its forests use it as a source of minor or non-timber forest products, such as almaciga resin and rattan. It serves as the major watershed of the five municipalities feeding the surrounding lowlands, which also includes the irrigation systems that support agricultural lands. The mountain is also a sanctuary to a rich diversity of species — a number of which are important animals and plants endemic to the mountain.

But the growing population and rapid urbanization in the province's mainland severely threatens the rich biological and cultural diversity of MMPL, as the utilization of its land, forests, and other non-timber resources increases.

TEN-YEAR JOURNEY TO DECLARATION OF PROTECTION

The LGUs of the five municipalities that MMPL touches proposed the establishment of the forests as protected areas in 1997. This proposal led to a series of consultations until the Provincial Government issued an executive order to create the Mount Mantalingahan Management and Planning Task Force (MMPTF). This task force was mandated to formulate a management strategy.

The MMPTF was later renamed the South Palawan Planning Council (SPPC) to cover both the terrestrial and marine territories of the five municipalities, which the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) proclaimed as the South Palawan Planning Area (SPPA).

In the same year, a strategic management plan for SPPA was prepared, which the PCSD approved. One of the programs in the SPPA was the identification and establishment of upland management areas or protected areas.

Based on the Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA), Mt. Mantalingahan satisfied the category of Protected Landscape under the definition of Republic Act 7586, the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The LGUs sought technical assistance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Conservation International (CI) – Philippines, to comply with the technical and legal requirements to establish Mt. Mantalingahan as a protected landscape, under the NIPAS Act.



Today, MMPL is one of the 10 sites of the Alliance for Zero Extinction in the Philippines, and one of the 11 important bird areas in Palawan.

After the compliance in 2007, the PCSD approved the creation of MMPL through Resolution No. 07-328 and soon after, endorsed MMPL for Presidential Proclamation through the regional and central offices of the DENR.

On June 23, 2009, Mount Mantalingahan became known as MMPL, and was designated as a protected area through Presidential Proclamation 1815, signed by President Gloria Arroyo. This made it the largest terrestrial protected area in Palawan.

Most of the threatened and restricted-range birds of the Palawan Endemic Bird Area are found in MMPL and its adjacent lowlands. With the recent discoveries of several potentially new species of plants and animals in the area, MMPL represents a significant contribution to the known pool of Philippine and global biodiversity.

MT. MANTALINGAHAN PROTECTED LANDSCAPE (MMPL) ENDOWMENT FUND

The MMPL Endowment Fund is a special initiative of the Board of Trustees of the Forest Foundation Philippines, after discussions with Conservation International, the MMPL Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and other stakeholders. The Foundation received a grant of US\$1 million from Conservation International to assist with the capitalization of the MMPL Endowment Fund, pursuant to a Grant Agreement entered into in January 2016.

This initial capitalization came from the Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund (GCF), a program that mobilizes financial resources for the creation, expansion, and management of protected areas in the world.



Forest Foundation Philippines is responsible for the administration and management of the trust fund, with guidance from the MMPL Endowment Advisory Committee. Together with the MMPL PAMB and other stakeholders, fundraising efforts will be undertaken to achieve its capitalization target of US\$2.7 million.

The trust fund is the first of its kind in the Philippines, and will provide sustainable financing for the long-term maintenance, protection, and enrichment of the biodiversity within the MMPL.

ENDOWMENT STRUCTURE

CI provided the initial capital of USD 1M

Forest Foundation:

- received the fund as a grantee of CI
- invests and manages it to fulfill its role as the endowment manager
- provides grant to MMPL PAMB

MMPL PAMB:

- receives the fund as grantee of Forest Foundation
- implements the activities approved under the Grant Agreement

MMPL Endowment Advisory Committee:

- composed of representatives from Forest Foundation Board of Trustees, NGOs, national and local governments, academe, business, and IP sectors
- provides recommendations on grant making
- provides recommendations on directions and strategies for fundraising efforts

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