



The Greening of Santiago City, Isabela

The Environmental Management Bureau of Region 1 announces that a feasibility study for a greening system is going to be developed for the city of Santiago in Isabela. Not merely for aesthetics, the project is also focused on restoration of the city's inland waters by improving its quality¹.

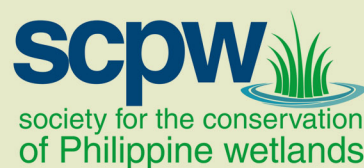
The city of Santiago can be found in the northern part of the Philippines in the Province of Isabella. A flat and fertile land of the Cagayan Valley, it sits surrounded by the mountain ranges of Caraballo in the south, the Great Sierra Madre in the east and the Cordillera Mountain Range in the west.

Inland bodies of water in the city is composed mainly of the tributaries of the Cagayan River Basin called the Calao-Delinquente-Diadi River System (CDDRS). Because of this, portions near the river are classified by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau as having moderate to high susceptibility to flooding.

Currently, the CDDRS is a Water Quality Management Area (WQMA). This designation, effective 2016, protects it from development activities and enforce compliance to the Clean Water Act of 2004, specifically the provision on maintaining or improving water quality based on standards set by the law⁶. Ramon Paje, the former Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary who signed the WQMA said, "the river system will now be placed under close monitoring by authorities to ensure that its water quality complies with the standards set forth under Republic Act No. 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004"⁷.

The CDDRS is an important water body in Santiago City, especially to its farmers which utilize it as source of irrigation to their farms. Properly managing it not only secure the future of the city's agricultural works by having a clean source of water especially when drought or dry spells occurs, but also ensure that the water body can handle rushing flood waters in times of rain.

Mapping Wetland Priorities for Ecosystem - based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (EbA) in the Philippines



Note: (1) EMB to carry out P3.5-m greening for Santiago City. Ben Moses Ebreo. 2018 (from <http://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/264785>) (2) DENR acts to protect Isabela river system, 2016. (from: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/denr-acts-to-protect-isabela-river-system/>) (3) DENR to protect river in Isabela. Ellalyn De Vera, 2016. (From <http://2016.mb.com.ph/2016/01/15/denr-to-protect-river-in-isabela/>)

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Banner photo by Maria Kristina Cuenca (Davao River traversing the city)

Society for the Conservation of the Philippine Wetlands, Inc.
Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity
Management Bureau
Ramsar Regional Centre - East Asia

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