

Pacific Blue Foundation

2017 Annual Report



@Frankie J. Rivera

Mission

Pacific Blue Foundation (PBF) provides basic research, education, encouragement, and dissemination of sustainable practices in coastal regions with the ultimate goal of preserving and promoting the biological and cultural diversity of the region.



2017 Annual Report

**3...Board of Directors
and Staff**

**4...Project Highlights:
Veitau Waqa –
the boat lives**

**7...Project Highlights:
Lau Seascape Initiative**

**8...Project Highlights:
Beqa Lagoon Initiative**

10...Special Activities

12...Grants

Board of Directors and Staff

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Consultants

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Scripps Institute of Oceanography; University of California, San Diego

Apenisa (Ben) Rakanace

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation

Peter Sipeli

ArtTalk Fiji, Waisiliva Art Gallery, The Poetry Shop

Project Highlights: Veitau Waqa – the boat lives

The Making of a New Drua

PBF thanks Walt Disney Pictures Ltd for not only providing the financial assistance to construct a *drua* (traditional Fijian double-hulled canoe), but also for making the animated movie *Moana*.



Disney's *Moana* conveys the wonder of seafaring and oceanic navigation while celebrating the culture of Pacific island storytelling. Central to the film is the fictional character Te Fiti, the mother island of Oceania whose "heart" holds the power of all creation. Te Fiti represents nature, and her heart is humankind's connection to it. When Te Fiti has her heart, nature is in harmony and life flourishes.

In 2012 and 2013, Walt Disney Pictures was performing research for the film in the Pacific Islands. Several Fijian groups, including the Korova community near Suva, offered them filming opportunities.

Two years later, in appreciation for the help, Walt Disney Pictures donated the necessary funds to build a new drua. They sought advice from Dr. Paul Geraghty at the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Dr. Greg Mitchell of PBF. Kerry Donovan, PBF's Pacific Islands coordinator, managed the project along with master boat craftsman and leader of the Korova community, Semiti Cama. Other elders and apprentices from the community also assisted.



Semiti Cama built the drua using traditional methods and only a few modern materials and tools. *Moana* hit theaters in October 2016, and the drua—which Semiti Cama and Osnat Shurer, an animation producer at Disney, named *Heart of Te Fiti*—launched six months later on the first of April 2017. Semiti Cama captained her maiden voyage across the Rewa Delta near Korova's settlement.

Then in August, *Heart of Te Fiti* went head-to-head against another new drua in the 9th-annual [Veitau Waqa – the boat lives](#) an event PBF started in 2009 in order to draw public attention to traditional Fijian boats and to preserve the island nation's long-held boating culture. *Heart of Te Fiti* won first place, displaying the adept skills of its local sailors and the excellent construction of its rigging and hull.

An Ocean of Ideas–TEDxSuva

Tikoidelaimakotu Fuluna (aka Jim) grew up in Korova, Suva—a community with a heritage of canoe building and sailing that originated on Moce Island in Fiji's Eastern Lau group. He is an avid sailor in the PBF-sponsored [Veitau Waqa – the boat lives](#), and TEDx invited him to share his personal story.



At TedxSuva, which took place on 6 May 2017, Jim described how the sea changed his life. At the age of three, it claimed his father’s life while he was sailing a drua from Lau to Suva. Having finished studying mechanical engineering, Jim now dreams of completing a well-publicized return trip from Suva to his home island to show that this practice of sailing with traditional canoes is very much alive in Fiji.

Throughout his life’s journey he has never forgotten his oceanic roots, and he calls on us to once again value the body of water that sustains our planet and the ancient traditions for living sustainably with it.

Korova’s Last Canoe Builder

Semiti Cama, the village elder from Korova, boat builder, and community headman, shared his ideas and thoughts on the culture of ocean navigation and of the strong relationship between the Korova community and PBF in an article for *ArtTalk Fiji*, an independent online art magazine.

In 2009, the people of Korova began working with Dr. Greg Mitchell, founder of PBF, on *Veitau Waqa – the boat lives* who were inspired by a similar ancient pastime from Fulaga Island in Lau.



“Along with Greg and others, we started to organize and participate in the Veitau Waqa along the Suva seawall to help revive interest in our traditional canoes.” (Semiti Cama, April 2017)

Below is the link to the *ArtTalk* article:
<https://arttalkfiji.com/2017/04/13/issue-2>

Sponsor Reception for *Veitau Waqa—the boat lives*



Delegates attended a reception in May held at the Holiday Inn, Suva, where presentations were given by Kerry Donovan, PBF’s Pacific Islands coordinator, and Apenisa Rakanace, PBF’s consultant generously donated from FBCTV. The television station also donated radio and television marketing time slots. The event, held and Holiday Inn, which donated the venue, was aimed at raising awareness and support for the project and the races.

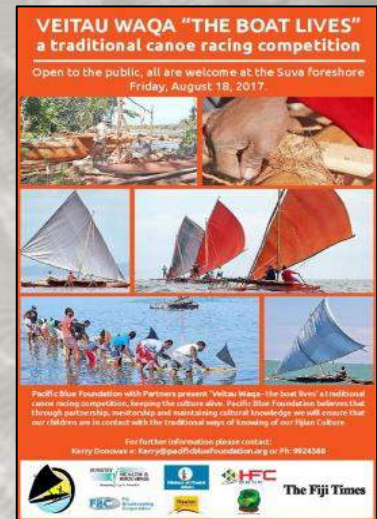
The 9th *Veitau Waqa—the boat lives*

“Veitau Waqa—The Boat Lives is one of the most important cultural events in Fiji, and it represents a portal that allows Fijians to take part in a cultural activity that isn’t accessible to many others, but also a window to other people to witness this ancient art of indigenous oceanic navigation.” (*ArtTalk Fiji*, August 2017). This year *Veitau Waqa – the boat lives* was another great celebration of traditional sailing at Suva City Council foreshore on August 18th. Like in years past, *Veitau Waqa – the boat lives* attracted public attention to help local Fijian boat-building families revive the knowledge and



culture around these traditional sailing canoes, which are hewn from forest trees. The event has always been and always will be open to all spectators and participants, including children who can learn how to sail toy boats (*bakanawa*). They are the future generation of craftsmen and sailors of full-size *camakau* (outrigger canoes) and *drua* boats, and it is them that will keep the traditional art of Fijian boat building and sailing alive.

There were three categories this year: the *drua*, with two canoes racing; the *camakau*, with seven canoes racing in two heats of each of two separate races allowing two sailors and three sailors; and *bakanawa*, with over 90 children racing their small canoes.



Organically-grown food from Cicia Island, which was generously funded by the Fiji Ministry of Health’s nutrition education program, was also served to the public. The idea came from the island of Totoya’s chief and PBF’s local community and government relations director Roko Sau who wanted spectators and participants to learn



about the traditional recipes of ancient Lauan communities. This is the same food that Lauan crews enjoyed when on sea voyages.

The event was featured in the *Fiji Times* newspaper and *ArtTalk* magazine.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=414025>

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=413167>

<https://artalkfiji.com/2017/09/03/issue-6/>

Traditional Approach—Empowerment at the Fijian Locally-Managed Marine Areas Network Annual General Meeting

The solution to Fiji's problems, be it climate change, global warming, or diminishing natural resources, lies in the practices of our forefathers. Recognizing this, PBF is working towards the revitalization of the traditional iTaukei canoe construction, food preservation, and herbal medication.



During a speech at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Roko Sau said “the idea behind the projects was to make Fijian communities more independent, which could only be achieved if the people appreciated and understood the functions of their natural resources from the mountains to the reefs.”

The speech was featured in *Fiji Times* newspaper:

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=425530>

Project Highlights: Lau Seascape Initiative

Feature Video of the Lau Seascape

During a trip to the central and south islands of the Lau group, a video was produced featuring the Lau seascape.

<https://web.facebook.com/PacificBlueFoundation/videos/1641532895886908>



Communicating Frankly Is Healthy for Lau



Roko Sau gave a presentation about the Lau Seascape Initiative during a very positive and constructive meeting for the Lau Provincial Council regarding the Lau Seascape Initiative. The Lau Seascape Initiative is supported by Conservation International, PBF, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Lau Provincial Council, and the Fiji Locally-Managed Marine

Area (FLMMA) Network, which was launched last year. The meeting was featured in the *Fiji Sun* newspaper.

<http://fijisun.com.fj/2017/08/02/frank-exchanges-healthy-for-lau-taoba>

Survey Finds Six New Marine Species

A team of scientists and conservationists, including PBF's Roko Sau and Dr. Davey Kline (a consultant from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego), set sail to the Lau group in June 2017 as part of the Lau Seascape Project.



Their mission was to survey marine life in the Lau Islands, which are scattered over thousands of square miles in the South Pacific. One of their scientific surveys discovered six new marine species endemic to the waters in the group.



Read more on the expedition on Conservation International's website:

http://stories.conservation.org/treasures-of-the-lau-islands?_ga=2.26035513.540242278.1512431460-1161371077.1503977491



The survey and its findings were also featured in *Fiji Times* newspaper.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?ref=archive&id=425273>

Project Highlights: Beqa Lagoon Initiative

Launching the Beqa Lagoon Initiative

The new Beqa Lagoon Initiative (BLI,) which was launched in 2017, scales up PBF’s past decade of work in the Beqa Lagoon area. The BLI is founded on ecosystem-based management of marine and coastal environments, incorporating an integrated, cross-sectorial, and solution-based approach to key anthropogenic and natural elements affecting the area.

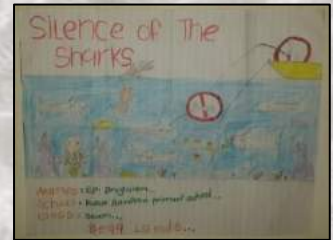


The BLI operates through capacity building and practical applications for the present sustainability and the future resilience of social-ecological systems. Efforts are directed through three main programs: Conserving the Lagoon, Healthy Vanua, and Sustainable Schools.

Silence of the Sharks Outreach



Ziggy Livnat, an award-winning filmmaker and founder of For the Sea Productions, had visited Beqa Lagoon and joined BLI project manager Sefano Katz on several outreach activities



within the partnering community, the nearby resort, and schools. One of the activities at the primary and secondary schools was the Silence of the Sharks campaign. Using underwater films of coral reefs, it taught kids about sharks and increased their awareness to the issues of coexisting with them.

The successful campaign was featured in the *Fiji Times Kaila!* newspaper. <http://pacificbluefoundation.org/silence-of-the-sharks-campaign>



Piloting Grey Water Filtration Systems



As it is in many other parts of the world, contamination of soil, groundwater, and surrounding marine water is an imminent threat in Fiji, and one of the main sources is grey water—the outflow of water from sinks, baths, showers, and laundry activity directly into the environment. Therefore, one of the emphases of the BLI is waste management. We conducted a workshop and a demonstration about feasible and affordable grey water filtration and installed several filtration systems in private homes within Beqa Island’s Rukua village.



Improving Skills for Maintenance and Appliances



Having access to adequate and operational mechanical appliances is vital for the livelihoods of people around the world. However, it is especially important in remote islands where these tools are used for daily activities, and maintenance and repairs can be expensive and logistically challenging. Through the BLI, PBF started teaching the community how to maintain and repair the generators, brush-cutters,

and outboard engines they currently own. The workshops were a great success. Many appliances were rescued from being thrown out, which also helped to reduce waste. We wish to give special thanks to Robert Edgar, Captain of the *Blue Whale* yacht of Blue Whale Adventures, who donated considerable time in support of this effort in improving technical skills of the community.



Designating Survey Sites and Creating a Baseline Dataset

Coral reef management requires a robust understanding of the state of the managed environment. For a long-term management plan to be successful, a monitoring scheme for the coral reefs has to be in place. An initial survey trip on board the *Blue Whale*—a 60-foot sailing yacht that Blue Whale Adventures generously donated to PBF as a research vessel—produced the first comprehensive baseline dataset with designated survey sites.



The purpose of the trip was to select sites that will be used to monitor the reefs from both inside and outside the traditionally chosen marine protected areas; which are called *tabu* in the local Fijian language. Six sites were selected within the Rukua *qoliqoli* (fishing grounds) where surveys will be taken for years to come. This enables PBF to monitor the changes in the state of the reefs over time. Finding representative sites, with the same depth and structural complexity inside and outside the *tabu* areas, is essential for making a representational comparison.

Community Capacity Building



Capacity building of leadership in communities is key to successful discussions and cooperation. Within the scope of the BLI, the PBF team, together with the provincial offices of Rewa and Serua, has been engaging communities in workshops to strengthen and empower their

leadership. There has been emphasis on the benefits of the roles of the *Yaubula* (natural resources) Management Support Teams (YMST) leading the way towards adequate management of the natural resources in Beqa Lagoon.



Special Activities

The Sireli Kago Education Fund (SKEF)

We honor the dedicated hard work by the late Sireli Kago with this education fund. Pacific Blue Foundation supports Yanuca and Totoya Island’s people to improve working skills and earning capacity with higher education. From good education within the individual, family unit or group business there can be better use of increased family income to be spent on improved home facilities, business expansion and community commitments. The SKEF pays for 50% of all registration and tuition fees for secondary, tertiary and other trade skills students or workers. Village Councils have pledged to pay 25%, and student and family pay the remaining 25%.

The SKEF supported three people from Yanuca Island and one person from Totoya Island to undertake studies in 2017. These are Sailosi Dokonivalu, for a Bachelors of Software Engineering at the University of the South Pacific (USP); Lanietta Kuruybaki Naimiri, for Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at Fijian National University; Senivalati Waqanivalalagi, for a Bachelor of Commerce at the USP, and; Afatareki Mataika Roko for a Bachelors of Commerce at the USP. We extend our pride in Mr. Mataika for graduating for his graduation and his current pursuit as a Post-Graduate in Professional Accounting.



The UN Oceans Conference New York



In June, coinciding with World Oceans Day, the United Nations held its first conference regarding the health of the planet’s oceans. The governments of Fiji and Sweden co-hosted the New York event, which aimed to reverse the decline of the health of the oceans and seas using concrete solutions and engagement from all. It also promoted progress in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is part of the 2030 Agenda adopted by all 193 UN Member States in 2015.

Pacific Blue Foundation’s Roko Sau represented Fiji as the FLMMA Network trustee and traveled to New York to present, discuss, and learn about the future of our oceans. The success of the conference led to many voluntary commitments including, “Scaling up locally-managed marine areas to 100% of Fiji’s customary marine areas” and “integrated coastal management to preserve ecosystems services, improve climate resilience, and sustain livelihoods in Fiji”.



COP23



The 23rd annual Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change created the ground to find information about climate change and its effects, learn about the objectives of COP23, read statements and speeches by the COP23

President, Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, and find out more about innovative climate action initiatives and projects. It was the place to highlight the particular challenges that climate change presents to Fiji and other vulnerable areas around the globe.

PBF's Roko Sau, represented Fiji and traveled to Bonn, Germany to present, discuss, and learn about the future of our oceans. Some of the key achievements of the conference were the establishment of the 2018 Talanoa dialogue, an inclusive and participatory story telling process; implementation guidelines for the Paris agreement; launch of ocean pathway partnership; Finalization of the gender action plan, and; finalization of the local communities and indigenous people's platform.

Chief: People Continue to Turn a Blind Eye

The iTaukei people can lose natural resources entrusted to their care if they continue to turn a blind eye to the management of these endowments.

While officially closing the week-long FLMMA AGM in Bua Lomanikoro, Lau chief and PBF's Roko Sau, said the iTaukei people could either use their natural resources as a means of earning a life, or they could sit on it and be ignorant of the treasures they have. "In an age when time is changing fast, we must remember that these resources are not wholly ours, but something passed to us and something we owe to our future generations."



The closing speech was featured in the *Fiji Times* newspaper:
<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=425272>

Beqa Passage and Lagoon as a PSSA



A Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) is a zone that requires the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to give it official special protection from maritime activity due to the zone's significance for ecological, socio-economic, and/or scientific reasons. PSSAs tend to be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities.

The National PSSA Task Force, which includes Pacific Blue Foundation, has started the planning process to introduce a PSSA in Fiji. The area encompassing the Beqa Passage, Beqa Lagoon and nearby coast of Viti Levu, identified as an ideal candidate for a PSSA aiming to reduce the chance of an accident damaging its diverse ecosystem.

Pacific Blue Foundation's Sefano Katz is part of the core drafting group, helping with the proposal process, which addresses the criteria needed for the area to be designated a PSSA. These criteria include 1) ecological factors (e.g., a unique, rare, or diverse ecosystem; or an ecosystem that is vulnerable to degradation by natural events or human activities); 2) social, cultural (e.g., significance of the area for recreation or tourism) and economic criteria, and; 3) scientific and educational criteria (e.g., biological research and historical value).



The proposal is expected to be ready to submit to the IMO in late 2018.
<https://msaf.com.fj/pssa>

Grants

Veitau Waqa

The 2017 Veitau Waqa – The Boat Lives event was co-sponsored by Pacific Blue Foundation and partners, providing ongoing and new support. These include:

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation



Ministry of iTaukei Affairs



iTaukei Land Trust Board



Department of Heritage and Arts



HFC Bank



Holiday Inn



Ministry of Health and Medical Services



UNDP-GEF SGP



by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

The Beqa Lagoon Initiative has received support from the Small Grants Program (SGP). The program is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), administered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and executed



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Sustaining Reef Communities