



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN

35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

PRESS RELEASE

Senator Perez visits *Serianthes Nelsonii* tree

Hagåtña, Guam, June 4, 2019 – On Monday, June 3rd, Senator Perez was invited to visit the *Serianthes Nelsonii* tree in Yigo, through the Governor's Office.

The visit gave lawmakers a chance to see the location of the tree and the proximity of its settings. "I thank the Governor's Office for the opportunity. This will give visual awareness to distances that are being discussed regarding *Serianthes Nelsonii* tree and its surroundings."

Senator Perez has sent a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife requesting re-initiation of Consultation for the *Serianthes nelsonii*, *Pteropus mariannus mariannus*, *Hypolimnas octocula marianensis*, *Tabernaemontana rotensis*, *Heritiera longipetiolata*, *Cycas Micronesia*, which are all endangered and threatened species.

The habitat of these species is incorporated in portions of military properties. This limestone forest provides a contiguous forest that is critical to the survival of our Mariana fruit bat (*Pteropus mariannus mariannus*), Mariana eight spot butterfly (*Hypolimnas octocula marianensis*), our native *Serianthes nelsonii* tree and endemic tree snails. It is also the site where healthy *fading* (*Cycas Micronesia*) remain due to the unique cockpit karst that cannot be replicated and that took millennia to develop with the formation of our island.

In a response from USFWS, which cited the decision being placed on the Department of the Navy, Senator Perez has requested the assistance of the Governor of Guam, on her request for re-initiation to pause on military construction until the genetic studies are completed, and relocation of the firing ranges.

The work on the genetics is in the final stages of preparation for publication. Senator Perez states, "It is important to wait for this phylogenetic study to create a bigger picture of the genetic diversity in the region and the world. The *Serianthes* tree on Guam could potentially be the only species of its kind."

According to Else Demeulenaere, Associate Director, Center for Island Sustainability, "A 100 feet buffer is not enough to sustain a healthy *Serianthes* population surrounded by a healthy forest. The current tree and the seedlings should be preserved as a viable *Serianthes* population, because the tree and seedlings thrive in the current enclosure."

"I urge that the construction of Live Fire Training Range Complex at Northwest Field be relocated. The largest of the firing ranges, the Multi-purpose Machine Gun range, is the one that is closest to the mother tree at 100 feet distance from the footprint should be relocated out of harm's way from the mother tree," said Senator Perez.

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