Landowners of Ipis in Kuop Atoll Celebrate Completion of the Kuop Conservation Project Guardhouse

November 24, 2020

On Tuesday, November 17, 2020, the landowners of Ipis in Kuop Atoll (Moses family) from Uman, Chuuk, held an opening ceremony (Efinun) for the Kuop Conservation Project Guardhouse. Despite the bad weather and great distance to Kuop, there was good turnout with many of the people from Uman going out over the weekend and staying until the ceremony on Tuesday. The ceremony was attended by representatives from Legislature (Acting President of Senate, the Honorable Nelson Stephen; House R&D Chair, Junior Nomau; and, Senator Wisney Nakayama); Director of the Chuuk Department of Marine Resources, Curtis Graham and Deputy Director, Binasto Ruben; Director of Visitors Bureau, Douglas Marar; Director of the Registrar of Corporations, Inson Namper; Governor’s Office representative, Janet Sisam; Department of Agriculture representative, Joakim Wasan; Chuuk Conservation Society Director, Marcellus Akapito as well as officials and traditional leaders from Uman Municipality. Unfortunately, because of COVID19 restrictions, representatives of Seacology and the Micronesia Conservation Trust, who financed the project, and some of the other partners were not able to travel to Chuuk for the ceremony. The Kuop MPA is now officially declared by the landowners and the traditional chief. A joint enforcement agreement between the Department of Marine Resources and the land/resource owners will continue moving forward and community consultations to finalize the draft management plan and MOU are underway. Seacology, a US based private foundation, provided a grant in the amount of $35,000 to support this vital conservation program in Chuuk. Kuop is one of FSM’s largest Marine Protected Areas with a size of 10,583 hectares. The no-take reserve area will provide protection for local fisheries, corals, turtles and sharks and will play a vital role in ensuring that Chuuk’s unique resources are managed effectively for the resource owners and people of Chuuk now, and for generations to come.
2. Landowners gather to celebrate completion of guardhouse