

## Pohnpei State invasive species management meets for the first learning exchange

May 20, 2021

On May 14, 2021, the Invasive Species Taskforce of Pohnpei (ISTOP) conducted an invasive species management and control learning exchange between the municipalities of Pohnpei. The event began with an opening prayer by Deacon Fred Martin representing the Madolenihmw farmers. The Chief of Pohnpei State Agriculture, who is also the Chairman of ISTOP, Mr. Mark Kostka-Kiroun en Pohn Awak was the Master of Ceremony for this event. The learning exchange was attended by 19 farmers from the



*Image 1. (Photo courtesy of ISTOP) Invasive species learning exchange participants listen to presentation.*



*Image 2 (Photo courtesy of ISTOP) Invasive species learning exchange participants pose for a photo.*

municipalities. A key highlight of this first Invasive species management learning exchange was the presence of the Honorable Iso Nahnken of Sokehs. His presence did not only elevate the significance of the event but will ensure support from the Sokehs traditional leaders, which we hope will leverage further support from the traditional leaders of the other municipalities. The other highlight of the event was the sharing of lessons learned from the ongoing invasive species management and eradication work in each of the respective municipalities. All participating municipal representatives have a good understanding of the invasive species plants and locations that are being eradicated and/or controlled. All

representatives have received training to identify, eradicate, and manage targeted invasive species. They now have the skills to safely use the chemicals to eradicate the target invasive species without adversely impacting the natural flora and fauna. All these community volunteers are keenly aware of the adverse impacts invasive species have on our island ecosystems, agriculture production and livelihoods. They are all optimistic that their joint efforts will lead to the complete eradication of the 6 targeted species (False Sakau, Ivy gourd, Chain of Love, Honolulu Rose, Octopus tree and the purple trumpet vine) from Pohnpei. Finally, they all are supportive of the ISTOP initiative to ensure that all unwanted species are eradicated,



managed or prevented from entering our shores. Kalahngan lap to the Iso Nahnken of Sokehs, Deacon Martin, and all the participating municipal representatives of Madolenihmw, Sokehs, Nett and U municipalities. A special thank you to the Pohnpei state government- the Department of Resources and Development for providing the venue and coordinating the event with ISTOP. It is the hope of ISTOP, that Invasive species management becomes a priority for Pohnpei State and that similar learning exchanges happen as necessary.