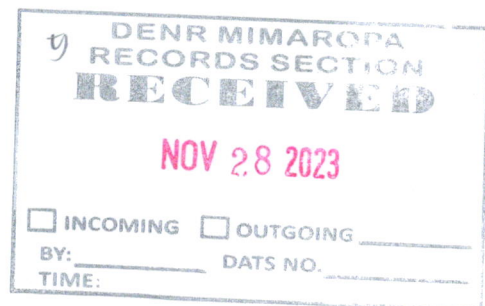




14 November 2023



MEMORANDUM

FOR : **FELIX S. MIRASOL, JR., CESO IV**
OIC, Regional Executive Director
DENR MIMAROPA Region
1515 DENR by the Bay Building,
Roxas Blvd, Brgy. 668,
Ermita, Manila

THRU : **MAXIMO C. LANDRITO**
OIC, Assistant Regional Director
for Technical Services

FROM : **THE OIC, PENR OFFICER**
PENRO Romblon

SUBJECT : **SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE STAFF WORK REGARDING
THE ILLEGAL SMALL-SCALE MINING OF GOLD IN SITIO
HANGGAN, BRGY. MABULO, SAN FERNANDO, ROMBLON**

Respectfully submitted is the complete staff work on the illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, Romblon as per directive of the Officer in Charge, Regional Executive Director of DENR MIMAROPA Region.

For your information and reference.


CESAR P. ODI



08 November 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR : THE OIC, PENR OFFICER
PENRO Romblon

FROM : FELIX CARL F. FALQUERABAO
Science Research Specialist II

**SUBJECT : COMPLETE STAFF WORK ON THE ILLEGAL SMALL-
SCALE MINING OF GOLD IN SITIO HANGGAN,
BRGY. MABULO, SAN FERNANDO, ROMBLON**

Background Information

Since a complaint was lodged by the Punong Barangay of Barangay Mabulo, Hon. Armando Rios, on February 2023, there is a growing concern among the citizens, LGU, and Provincial Government of Romblon regarding the continuous illegal small-scale mining of gold within the Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area.

Based on investigations conducted, it was found out that the illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando is a recurring activity. This information was attested by the Barangay Local Government Unit and the citizens of Brgy. Mabulo. The illegal activity can be easily detected because of the silty river runoff produced during on-going operations upstream.

Pursuant to the directive of DENR MIMAROPA Regional Executive Director, Felix S. Mirasol, Jr., through Romblon Officer in Charge, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Cesar P. Odi, a complete staff work regarding the illegal small-scale mining in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, Romblon has been drafted to review existing issues and concerns encountered and recommend sustainable actions to address such matter.

Timeline of Undertakings, Findings, and Observations

• **2012 to 2017**

The earliest record of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau MIMAROPA of the illegal activities in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando was dated back in 2016 when complaints were referred to the Office by the Provincial Government of Romblon. However, based on the result of the investigation of Engr. Irwin Martinez and Engr. Elmer Crisologo of MGB MIMAROPA, the illegal activities have been going on for quite some time prior to their field investigation.

The illegal activities were put into halt due to the initiative of former Governor Eduardo Firmalo and former Secretary Gina Lopez who deployed a team composed of Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, and DENR to specifically patrol the perimeter of Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area for additional protection and intervention from any illegal activities.

According to Forest Ranger Ludwin M. Ruado who was part of the team representing DENR, the initiative started in 2012 and lasted until 2017. The patrolling activity was a 24/7 trekking and traverse within Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area. The initiative served its purpose when the illegal activities were dispersed during those years. However, after the initiative stopped, the illegal activities resumed.

- **2023**

On **07 February 2023**, personnel from DENR Sibuyan Sub-station investigated the illegal small-scale mining in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, Romblon pursuant to the report of Hon. Armando Rios during the 31 January 2023 Protected Area Management Board Meeting.

According to the investigation report, the team verified the on-going illegal small-scale mining of gold in the subject area due to the fresh footprints, ground extraction, and the presence of extraction tools. They also noted small bunk houses which was mostly used as a kitchen. The team also identified an approximate 200 square meter expansion on the ground extraction adjacent to the previous extraction area. The illegal mining activity was conducted in a weekly basis with an estimated 30 persons working in the area. Damages incurred in the area include uprooted naturally grown trees, erosion, and siltation of river runoff. It was also noted in the report that a natural landslide was observed near the subject area.

On **08 August 2023**, same personnel from DENR Sibuyan Sub-station conducted monitoring in the same subject area. The team once again verified the on-going illegal small-scale mining of gold in the subject area.

Based on the monitoring report, the team found out that the group responsible for the illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sitio Hanggan were residents from Brgy. Dulangan, Magdiwang, Romblon (adjacent Municipality of San Fernando) according to interviews of residents from the adjacent Sitio Malapeñas, Brgy. Mabulo. Brgy. Dulangan and Brgy. Ipil in the Municipality of Magdiwang, Romblon were illegal gold mining hotspots in the island of Sibuyan. As claimed by the residents of Sitio Malapeñas, people from Brgy. Mabulo do not have the capacity and knowledge when it comes to small-scale gold mining unlike people from said Barangays.

During monitoring, the team observed man-made tunnels, uprooted trees, more extraction tools, footprints, eroded topsoil, silted river runoff, and a modified stream utilized for illegal gold mining operation.

On **19 September 2023**, the 3rd Quarter Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) meeting was conducted at the Conference Room, Office of the Governor, 2nd Floor, Capitol Building, Brgy. Capaclan, Romblon, Romblon. The meeting was presided by the Chairperson, Honorable Governor Jose R. Riano, and attended by the members of the Provincial Peace and Order Council including OIC, PENR Officer Cesar P. Odi who presented the updated report regarding environmental protection activities of PENRO – Romblon. Included in the presentation was the proposed hiring of Park Rangers to be deployed in the Protected Area Management Office – Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park (PAMO – MGGNP) which is to be funded by the Provincial Government of Romblon for F.Y. 2024 amounting to One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00).

After the presentation, Engr. Raynaldo Angel De Juan as the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB) Head Technical Secretariat, commented about the on-going illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo since it was also reported in his Office. He suggested that a joint regular monitoring on illegal mining hotspots be consistently conducted by personnel from PAMO – MGGNP, PMRB, LGU/BLGU, IP's, PNP, and AFP. These areas include Mt. Banilad in Brgy. Mabini, San Fernando, Mt. Bangko-bangko and Mt. Hanggan in Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, and Brgy. Ipil and Brgy. Dulangan in Magdiwang, Romblon.

On the 4th Quarter 2023 PAMB En Banc Meeting of Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park held on **12 October 2023** at Sanctuary Garden Resort, Brgy. Tampayan, Magdiwang, Romblon, the Board discussed the issue on the illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sitio Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, and other illegal mining hotspots in the Island of Sibuyan. PASu Manuel B. Romero expressed to the Board the prime drawback of PAMO – MGGNP which was the deficit of personnel. He stated that due to the number of targets PAMO – MGGNP has been given every year, personnel cannot focus on one especially when targets were due at same time. OIC, PENR Officer Cesar P. Odi relayed to the Board PENRO Romblon's 2024 proposal regarding the hiring of additional Park Rangers to be deployed in PAMO – MGGNP which is to be funded by the Provincial Government of Romblon amounting to One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00). The Board unanimously voted for the pursuant of this proposal and requested the secretariat for a request letter addressed to the Provincial Government of Romblon detailing the requirements needed. The Board also suggested a request for assistance to the Governor for additional enforcement unit (AFP, PNP, etc.) that will solely focus on patrolling Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area for additional support.

Recommendations

The primary problem identified by PAMO – MGGNP is the deficit of personnel patrolling Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area. In order to maintain an effective stoppage of illegal small-scale mining of gold in Sibuyan Island, it is recommended that additional personnel be deployed as an efficient strategy and intervention.

Based on previous investigations conducted by personnel from Protected Area Management Office – Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park, they recommended that a particular

team be assigned to solely conduct regular patrolling in illegal small-scale mining hotspots in Sibuyan Island. Accordingly, the team recommended that the barangay local government unit who has jurisdiction in the subject area join the patrolling team. They also added the need for assistance from uniformed personnel as additional manpower and security assistance. Lastly, file appropriate criminal liability to the person/s that will be caught engaging in the small-scale mining activities pursuant to RA 7942 otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, and DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-05, "Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7586, or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992, as amended by RA 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act of 2018".

Engr. Raynaldo Angel De Juan as the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB) Head Technical Secretariat shared the same recommendation when he suggested that a joint regular monitoring on illegal mining hotspots be consistently conducted by personnel from PAMO – MGGNP, PMRB, LGU/BLGU, IP's, PNP, and AFP during the 3rd Quarter Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) meeting.

During the 4th Quarter 2023 PAMB En Banc Meeting of Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park, the Board unanimously agreed and recommended the pursuance of PENRO Romblon's 2024 proposal regarding the hiring of additional Park Rangers to be deployed in PAMO – MGGNP, which is to be funded by the Provincial Government of Romblon amounting to One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00). The Board also recommended that a request for assistance be sent to the Governor for additional enforcement unit (AFP, PNP, etc.) that will solely focus on patrolling Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park and Protected Area for additional support.

For the OIC PENRO's consideration and further instruction.



FELIX CARL F. FALQUERABAO
Science Research Specialist II



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MIMAROPA Region

Document Routing Slip

Document Number: OG-2023-122602 **Date Endocded:** 14-Nov-2023
Sender: Cesar P. Odi, OIC PENR Officer
Address: Odiongan, Romblon
Subject: Memo dated November 14, 2023 re: Submission of CSW regarding the illegal small-scale mining of gold at So. Hanggan, Brgy. Mabulo, San Fernando, Romblon
Addressee: Felix S. Mirasol, Jr., CESO IV, OIC RED
Attachment(s): CSW Report
Urgent: Yes; received by Lei-Ane
Date Received: 14-Nov-2023

ROUTING AND ACTION INFORMATION				
FROM	DATE RECEIVED	FOR/TO	DATE RELEASED	ACCEPTANCE REMARKS/ACTION REQUIRED/TAKEN REMARKS/STATUS
OP	2023-11-14	OFFICE-PENRO (OP)	2023-11-14	Date: 2023-11-14 Status: IN From: leianegracemgan Message: Memo forwarded for further instructions/signature, please. Thank you. 15:47:16
			11/16	for release, please. Tax 