The paraw project was launched to rekindle Palawan’s ancient sailing traditions, a key part of our history and culture. In sharp decline since the 1970s (when engines became widely available) local knowledge of sailing, natural navigation and paraw building now is on the brink of disappearing.

“A return to sailing makes sense – our marine environment is under threat and fuel prices are rising. Learning to sail again will help Palaweños escape dependence on gasoline and diesel while, at the same time, giving them a deeper understanding and respect for the sea.”

Gener Paduga

PROJECT ORIGINS
In 2008 Gener Paduga crewed on a sailing yacht from Palawan to Africa. He witnessed thriving traditional sailing cultures in the Indian Ocean and Middle East and began questioning why ancient Filipino sailing traditions were in danger of extinction. Gener was inspired to revive native sailing, natural navigation and boat building techniques in his home province of Palawan.

WHAT MAKES THE PARAW EXTRAORDINARY?

It will be the largest paraw in existence…
At 72 feet, the paraw will be the largest of its kind. Boats of this size sailed Palawan waters centuries ago, transporting cargo and passengers, but it is many decades since one has been built or even seen.

The paraw is being constructed using traditional boat-building techniques…
We have conducted research and sought expert local knowledge on the techniques, skills and materials (such as particular kinds of wood) required to build a paraw.

Each stage of construction is being thoroughly documented…
•Through our blog palawanparaw.wordpress.com construction is being carefully documented for a wide audience on the internet.
•The carpenters themselves are photographing each detail of the construction process.
•California-based photographer Scott Sporleder is making a short documentary film about the paraw and its construction.
A LOCAL PROJECT
Honourable Marilou V Poligrates, Barangay Captain of Mauyon is proud to host the paraw construction project in her Barangay. Currently five local people are employed to work on the paraw full-time and others part-time. Locals working on the paraw receive training from master carpenters, highly skilled in traditional Palaweño sailboat building. These skills will serve them well in the future and we hope they will be passed on to others.

GIVING BACK TO THE ENVIRONMENT
• We are mindful that we must give back what we take from nature. A reforestation project beginning in June/July 2013 will replace the wood used building the paraw many times over.
• Species will be chosen to restore those used and only saplings over a year old will be planted to ensure their survival.

FUTURE OF THE BOAT
From November to May the paraw will sail on short 3-5 day expeditions in Palawan waters. Guests on board will experience the beauty of Palawan while learning about the role of sailing in the islands’ history and culture.

From June to October the paraw will be used for educational and social welfare projects around Palawan such as those already run by the Tao Kalahi Foundation. The paraw will also visit the Baywalk in Puerto Princesa to offer public tours and education about sailing.
Feedback from our blog:

“Projects like this may lean heavily on past knowledge, but they are very much the future. Global society has lusted after technology and “progress” for decades, at the expense of natural resources and quality of life. Now people are tentatively reversing back out of the cul-de-sac. This project is as political as it is environmental; it hands back knowledge, independence and power to ordinary people.

“Beautiful and ambitious, respect to you all.”

Mart, 24 April, 2013

INTERNET LINKS

Traditional Filipino boats: www.elaput.org/mig2boat.htm
Palawan Paraw Blog: palawanparaw.wordpress.com
Facebook page: www.facebook.com/palawanparaw