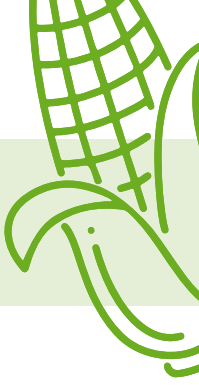


# Theme 1

## Food, Forests, and Farmers *Finding Sustainable Pathways for the Future*



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### ABSTRACT

## **Land Use Change Trends in Bukidnon and Local Government Efforts to Support Community Forest Management**

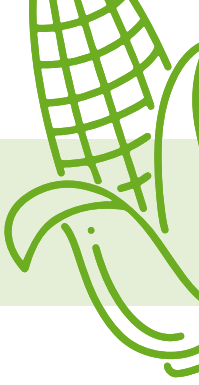
by Cecille M. Egnar

Bukidnon Province is a headwater province for Mindanao Island as it contains the headwaters of 4 of its 7 major river basins, i.e. the Rio Pulangi, Tagoloan, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao River Basins. This means that it is the source of water that supplies the domestic and agricultural water needs of a great percentage of the Mindanao population. Given its critical role in provisioning water for Mindanao, the Bukidnon Watershed Protection and Development Council was created in 1995 through Memorandum Order No 270 of then President Fidel V. Ramos. It has the main objective of fully protecting and preserving the remaining forest in the Bukidnon watersheds and to rehabilitate open areas within the headwaters of the watershed.

In order to understand the state of the land and water resources throughout Bukidnon, the Provincial government undertook an initial land cover assessment of Bukidnon in 2005 which was performed by its long-time partner, the Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC). This was the first of its kind in the country in terms of land use detail and accuracy, using state of the art tools back then in satellite imaging and field validation. The land cover mapping done in 2005 served as a benchmark as to the state of Bukidnon's land cover at that point, which was a milestone in the natural resource management efforts of the Province. In 2018, ESSC sought the help of the Forest Foundation Philippines to support another province-wide update that now gives a basis to compare trends in land use change in Bukidnon. Although there exist some gains in forest cover, there are more forest losses between 2005 and 2018.

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The Provincial Government through the BENRO, provides support to community-based forest protection and management as well as agroforestry initiatives, through an innovative PES scheme that uses charges from quarrying operations throughout the province (managed by the BENRO) to fund these localized efforts. It may not be perfect, but is a good start towards building a locally sustainable scheme for forest and watershed protection that supports our upland communities and farmers to ensure stable water supply needed for our agriculture and food production.

### About the Author

**Cecille M. Egnar** is the Chief of the Bukidnon Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO) of the Provincial Government of Bukidnon, Philippines. Cecille supports Community-based Forest Management and sees the importance of engaging with communities to encourage reforestation and sustainable management of forests and watersheds. She believes “science, policy, and local domains” are all integrated and should not be tackled individually.