

Camp Ebiil 2019



SUMMER FUN
learning and
exploring the best
of PALAU!!



Camp2019

Inside Story

- May 24-Jun 1 Campebiil Nguloo Voyage
- Jun 12-15 Counselors training camp
- Jun 16-21 Campebiil I
- Jul 4-6 Parent & Child Turtle monitoring camp
- Jul 14-21 Campebiil II
- Jul 23-28 Oregon State University Campebiil
- Jul 30-Aug 3 Campebiil with Sam's Tours SCUBA



Did you Know?

That there are over 400 caves in Peleliu? Yup! That's the question every child has to come back at the end of each day with an answer to- and to share with others. Post it on the "Did you Know" wall for others to see. Some of Ebiil interactive walls for learning, including a "Kindness Wall," a "Creativity Wall," a "Chores Wall," a "Traditional Medicine Wall," etc. Summer 2019 was a full summer beginning in May 2019 and much later in August—just a day before school let in!! Not enough time to explore what Palau's nature and culture has to offer for kids to learn! The summer began with a traditional voyage expedition to Nguloo, Yap, with Ebiil mentors, where they returned just in time to move into Campebiil and prepare for their training to assist the camps throughout the summer. A total of 102 campers and counselors took on exploring throughout Palau, some of its most amazing natural and cultural wonders! Even more important, developing conservation consciousness at earlier age.

Nguloo voyage with Grand Navigator Sesario

Was a life-changing experience for the participants as we learn to let go of the many artificial boundaries we have created for ourselves to allow space for taking in what nature has orchestrated for the voyage -AMAZING!!

Next page



“Tao Man” Crossing Meaning the “Ocean for Men”

The crossing earned its name from its difficult current and challenging macroclimate, but not on this voyage. At least to the voyagers on board, this voyage was peaceful, adventurous, testing at times, but most of all, amazingly mystifying! We were even greeted at 3 AM, by dancing dolphins, whales, and turtles as we entered Nguloo after 3 days of sailing! It sounds crazy and it should be because that’s exactly how it felt at the time! To see a dolphin jump and twirl with bioluminescent glow sprinkled up in the

air is CRAZY! We were crying. At night the sky is a blanket of stars and showered with shooting stars or *melech* and *merchorch el btuch*. Guided by the waves and sun during the day and at night by the constellations, *Altair* going to Nguloo and *Corvus* returning home to Palau. Observing the rising and setting constellations to determine our course and measuring Polaris and Southern Cross position from the horizon we determined our position from Nguloo and where we came from. Observing big cumulus clouds for stored winds

and thunder and lightening on the horizon that could change the course of the wind and what that means for our sail. We take shift to man the sail and assist the crew of Maisu. And then there’s Nguloo! What an amazing place and people! Self sustained people who do not rely on ships or planes to feed or provide for them. George and his wife Maria with their son and elder aunt have lived on the island for the past 40 years, their only interaction with

“Nguloo took me back in time...” Ann Singeo

outside are of passing ships from the government of Yap, tourist live-aboard, and voyages such as ours. They welcomed us to their island with such generosity, offering us their huts for our shelter and their food during our stay. The island definitely took us back in time reminding us of our beautiful Palau once before. Small grassy paths

winding through coconut groves, thatched huts on stone platforms- and most amazing, turtle nest and sea birds everywhere!! Baby turtle hatchlings going into the water, tracks from new nesting, adults in front of beach, and sea birds on all the trees and even on the ground!! The youth mentors definitely gained an inch or two of maturity,



but that maybe for most of us, from those few days. Learning to appreciate the little things that matters... Thank you Ses and Maisu crew for an amazing voyage!

Begin with our history as a people

Campebiil always begins with a look into our oral history-our origins as a people. Following Orachel's oral history we travel from Melekeok, to Ngial, to Ngarchelong...



Orachel, the architect of Palau's many traditions and knowledge is depicted in many of our oral history including that of the Badrulechau. What should have been completed by dawn, Bairulechau construction was interrupted when Orachel acquired the knowledge from the gods carving the Bai at the bottom of Mekaeb between Blioliou and Ngeaur. Once he took the blueprint or "chas" for the Bai he went on to build what will become the first Bai of Palau in Melekeok where it would later on be sold to Rengulbai of Imeliik. Rengulbai won the bid by proposing to purchase the Bai by paying a certain amount for each Nglosech or post, establishing what is now the "Ocheraol Bai" tradition.

As the campers learn of the oral history they also travel to see a traditional Bai in Melekeok and learn from Mr. Temol Ongino the origins of Bai architecture, the various parts of the Bai and functions, oral history collections depicted in the various parts of the Bai, plant species used for structure, and animal species as symbols of values and principles. After

Orachel acquired the blueprint all the activities for structuring Bairulechau came to a halt and parts of the Bai are said to have fallen into the reef on the eastern shores of Babeldaob and maybe even around Blioliou. An "Orngodel" or beam was dropped in front of Ngial coast and the campers travelled there to witness it laying in the seagrass. There the campers learn with Rechemang Gabino Llecholech, who teaches the campers of the stone and its relationship to Badrulechau. The stone is located in front of Kalbid, Ngial. It is enormous and measures at 215 feet. And so the next task is to fit the beam onto the

post at Badrulechau to determine if it fits. Yup! It fits at about 200 feet from left to right post with an overhang of about 8 feet from each end. This completes the study of Bai Archeology and the campers return home to Ebiil where they will take on their daily chores of cleaning their dorms, yard, and helping with dinner. Afterwards, campers will prepare their group presentations as part of their study reflection and evaluation, paint with Elsei Tellei or carve with Danny and Jim.



Imuul for local history, Omkuuk for other villages stories connected to Melekeok, and Reberball for Olachitnger or proverbs

EBIIL CHECK!!

Time to *explore* one of the World best!

Babeldaob forest is identified a World Key Biodiversity Area with the highest endemic species per area in the World!! How cool is that? That's what Ebiil campers get to learn as they explore the pristine forest of Mesekelat area along the ancient interstate road of Babeldaob. Each group is tasked to investigate the forest and identify trees and plants associated with a particular traditional practice or industry of Palau. The list includes architecture, fishery, medicine, arts and performance, and food plants. The kids get excited every time they identify a species within their list and especially when they can eat it! They learn of plants such as Meliik,



Iuetekill, Elangel, and Kerdeu used within fishery for ropes, hooks and lines as well as

Kilkuld used in women's fishery and tattooing practices. "There are medicinal plants everywhere!" Exclaimed the excited campers. To add on to these already a huge list of plant species, the kids were in luck as the Esmiich or Terminallia Palauenses, a rare endemic tree species that only exist along the river from Mesekelat in Ngchesar to Ngatpang Tebecheding was in bloom and fruiting!!! A rare opportunity-exactly what is needed for one to study plants! To know our precious forest is not enough for a good environmental ambassador, one must also plant trees to restore native forest that ensures protection of our fresh water resources and reef. To this end the campers travel to Ngaremlengui and Ngial where they get to plant native trees around the new housing development area upon the ridge of Ngermetengel and Ngermechau. Particularly around the old mining site and Ngermechau Bai where large portions of bare soil continue to erode loading sediment into the connected bay of Ngaremlengui and Ngial's marine protected area of Ngemai.



Knowing and Appreciating leads to Protection

Campebiil I, went to Ngaremlengui to plant trees at the old Japanese mine site while Campebiil II and the Oregon State University planted trees with the Ngial protected area management office led by Willa Wong including the Ngial summer youth program. Ngial youth summer program participated in the Bai archeology study at the Orngodel. A wonderful opportunity for exchange between youths of Palau exploring their culture and nature wonders!

Additional activities included a tree planting event with Ngaremlengui youth summer program planting trees at the old mine site with their protected areas office. Together the youth planted a total of 656 trees and over 500 lemon grass storm water/ sediment fence. "Aaahh Good Job!" Incorporated into this years' camp is tree growth monitoring, contribution of our Oregon State University partners. Thank you Scott and

Bryan! But even before we can return home to Campebiil everyone deserves a refreshing cool dip into the beautiful Mesekelat river as part of the watershed protection study!



Cave Exploration!

Palauan, Yapese, Japanese military



Man! I love Camp Ebiil!!

Malakai Tarkong, 10 yrs. old... As we pulled into our awesome camp at Kambek, Peleliu, thanks to the generous support by the State and Governor Shmull.

A new adventure for Ebiilers is cave study from Irai to Bliliou where campers learn how caves are created and the oral histories associated. Thanks to the generous support from Airai State and their park rangers, including our trainer Leena Muller from MNRET, we once again had the opportunity to learn of Yapese caves and Balang quarry located at Metuk ra Bisech. It is said that Anagumang, a Yapese navigator sailed to Palau where he received permission to carve limestone into what is now referred to as Balang or Yapese stone money. Beginning with a fish shape, then on to a crescent moon, and finally the full moon to his satisfaction became the final design for the Yapese stone money today. The stone money quarry took on a new point of competition and as carvers tried to carve more and bigger sizes, the production became grueling and dangerous, causing loss of many lives on site or during the transporting across to Yap. At Metuk ra Bisech is one of the largest piece found in Palau measuring some 10 feet in diameter and 20 inches thick. After an incredible adventure at Metuk ra Bisech the campers were



In Bliliou the campers had the privilege of studying with Tangy one of Peleliu's best! Tangy's responsible for the starting and upkeep of their war relic museum. Tangy took us on an amazing tour of Bliliou's caves beginning with the story of Meluadelchur taking us through the Ii er a Irirs where the old woman lived with her two sons, Ereallartil and Rrusbedengel and onto the cave of Meluadelchur. Meuadelchur was a gigantic beast that ate half of the villagers forcing them to go in exile to Meyuns. Leaving the poor woman behind who will later on miraculously give birth to two sons who will defeat and take the life of the beast. Bliliou from what Tangy states, has over 400 caves. Many of which at later times were adapted by the Japanese military during their occupation in Bliliou. Many were modified and used for ammunition and bomb storage aligned behind the bloody nose ridge used to defend their occupation during US WW II invasion.

"I am coming back to Bliliou to spend more time visiting this Museum!" *Tekoi, 10 yrs. old and Lucky 14 yrs. old*

Later on we would be given the opportunity to visit the Museum and learn of its incredible development. Kudos to Bliliou and Tangy! Campers would be chanting phrases to Tangi during the bus ride. At the end of the day we are taken into our camp at Kambek where we would stay until the next day to explore Teluleu marine preserve and the Elochel channel with thousands of starfish bottom cleaners making the water so clear and crystal blue. Thank you Peleliu State and Governor Shmull! Thank you Lyman and Rayson for the boat ride!!



Ngarkeklau Campout- 'Ol Time favorite!

Ngarkeklau has so much to offer as an education site! It is here where campers learn about Palau's three IUCN red-listed endangered species of turtles, megapode, and dugong. This time, the kids get a chance to sail on Ebiil's new Kaeb! Off course with non other than Grand Navigator Sesario and Master Navigator Nick! We count our blessings for having the privilege of learning with them. Since the launching of the canoe, Ebiil's Youth Mentors have continued their sailing training and at this point have some of the kids assisting with the sailing class during camp. Iseko, Macy, Sarina, and Moss. The campers are given a chance to investigate in the mangrove habitat, monitor turtle nests with an expert Mr. Eberdong of which 3 new nests were identified. Unfortunately, the campers also learn that turtle egg poaching remains a real threat to the recovery of the endangered species population. On the lighter side of things-while monitoring megapode nests, the campers successfully identified another nest hidden in the deeper forest of Ngarkeklau!! Giving it a total of 7 megapode mounds! Hoorah! The campers successfully clean the island of all marine debris restoring the nesting grounds of turtles and megapode. Thank you campers and counselors! During Parent and Child camp, the campers were also blessed with a hatching of baby turtles allowing them to witness the rare event. In the evening is always the best time as kids learn weather prediction and star constellations with Ses, rewarded after for their good work of cleaning the nesting grounds with bon-fire, stories and SMORES!!!

This is also the night that they get to camp out in tents with their friends out in nature and often times even when they try to hide it, we know that no one ever goes to sleep according to lights out rules!



Elchung super excited of her first GT catch! Kids learned of the species being

protected and released the fish for another game! We will miss her as she leaves to attend masters program in Japan- but hopeful that she will return to make this program even bigger and better! Go EI!



Once the campers complete their participation on the endangered species studies they are given a chance to sail with Ses and Nick and during the second, with Ses, Moss, Iseko, and Macy! Proud of these young ladies who have taken on this new addition Ebiil studies! It is also during this time that the campers get a chance to snorkel Ebiil Channel, Ngarchelong's proud marine preserve that never cease to amaze snorkelers no matter how many times you visit the coral reef. It is during Campebiil II that the campers get a chance to witness a group of over 20 large Bumphead Parrot or Kemedukl cropping on the corals along the channel! A scene that remains with you forever! It is also an important reminder of why conservation areas are important and necessary to allow for each new generation an opportunity to witness these natural wonders that if it were not for Ebiil's protection will not be possible. An important message that we make sure that the campers understand as part of their learning experience at Ebiil. This includes the work of Mr. Eberdong who has dedicated his life to saving of our sea turtles from going extinct even after he's retirement from the government as endangered species program coordinator. Including Mr. Sesario who continues to teach without hesitation. Thank you both!





Getting ready to study sea grass ecosystem and determine sea cucumber population density at Ngarkekklau, Ngarchelong



On the way to monitor turtle and megapode nests

Once the campers learn to pay attention to the little details of the island, they soon realize all the cultural materials laying everywhere! Then it's hard to stop them!



Continued

Oregon State University has been conducting summer class at Campebiil for the last two years. This year a total of four Palau Community College students were able to join the field studies. This has been a most welcomed partnership as the study has provided so much development support for Ebiil environmental studies such as monitoring tree growth and sea cucumber out-planting. Ngarkekklau provides such a diverse space for environmental studies including that of archeology and anthropology. Campers are given the chance to explore the old village to determine remaining village structures as part of their mapping exercise. Groups are tasked to map out the stone path and where it leads to the major parts of the village, others map the major structures and important social spaces and properties, the Bai, dock, Diangel or canoe house, traditional bathing pool, etc.

“One group will follow the path to measure its length and record its GPS coordinates, while the other team measures and record all information for the Bai, and the rest look for tools and pottery shard,” says Elchung their trainer.

While all campers are always eager to explore there's always the few that really take this to heart and will investigate beyond what is expected. Those are the kids that as trainers we identify and support for potential long-term development.



“This is so cool- now the village really makes sense!!” Sanae, 11 yrs. old

Other areas of studies taken place on the island include mangrove ecosystem, seagrass, snails, and ants, as well as sea birds. OSU and PCC students participated in a monitoring exercise to determine sea cucumber population density at Ngarkekklau seagrass area.

During the Parent/Child Camp at Ngarkekklau the campers learned with Mr. Eberdong on techniques for relocating nest buried within watermarks and at risk of drowning. The campers and with Mr. Eberdong, successfully relocated a nest to higher grounds which is closely monitored for an expected hatching date around September 15th or 16th. The below picture shows Osu and campers relocating the turtle nest to higher grounds.

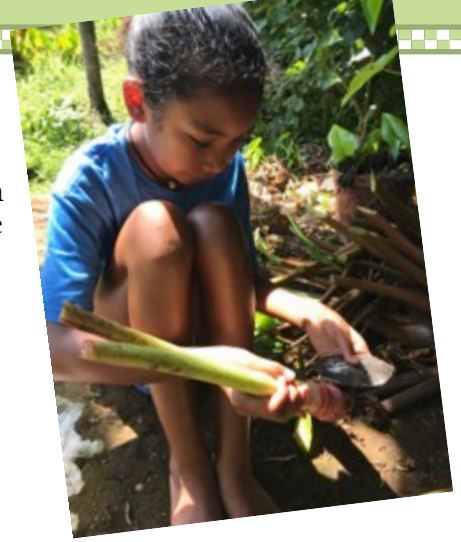


Tekoi el Chei me a Eliuis

Ask any camper what their favorite day of the camp is...



That's right! The campers love this day! Boys will say they come to the camp so to go fishing, while the girls just simply fall in love with the taro fields once they have the experience! Perhaps it's in our genes as Palauans, or maybe it's just simply a fun place to be and that's why men and women get hooked! This is the day when campers get to participate in what used to be two of the major institutions for men and women, boys and girls alike where intergenerational knowledge passage take place.



Boys would spend the morning fixing fishing lines and how to caste net. In the afternoon they would then be taken out by the "Rubak ra Port," to go fishing in the nearby reef area. They learn about the Northern Reef fishery regulations, learn what's protected, in season, size limit per species, etc. Together with their fishing supplies they bring measuring tapes and size limit listing. The idea is if they learn this young then they will incorporate conservation centered fishing practices someday as they become mature resource users. The boys came home from sea with just enough for them to practice fish identification and cleaning as part of their fishery lesson. The "Rubak er a Port," take it upon themselves to teach the boys at the community cleaning station or "odekel," and this time their trainers were Edward, Tino, Ibedul ra Lei, Saiky, Jim, Hillary, Baudista, and many others whom I am sure I have missed. To all of you we are most grateful that we continue to have real fishermen training the next generation.

Girls on the other hand get to spend time with trainers Rtik Ulang and Rose at the nearby taro patch in the village of Ollei. First lesson is with our young Mesei trainer Elchung, when they would participate in the instruction and Mesei vocabularies associated with the knowledge. Soon after they move on to the field to identify the properties and associated place names. Example is locating boundary markers "ulat," a wooden plank laid within the water line or "kellaeb." Thereafter, they begin lessons with the elder trainers on cultivation, harvesting, processing, and rules of conduct. Rules of conduct include values and principles, observation and respect to earth's energy flow, peaceful interaction with nature, etc. Finally, when all work is done it is "Mesei Spa" time. Coconut and Iaml spa at the river! At the end, what they prepare will be served as lunch for their parents the next day when the campers will return home. This also means movie night and staying up all night with friends new and old ones until next summer!!



Thank you Parents, Sponsors, and Donors!!!

Without your generous and kind support we would not be able to provide this in depth look and exploration into our natural world through the eyes of a Palauan child in their own culture, language, and land.

My land, My Water, My Home, may I be as good and beautiful to you as you have always been to me...

Ebiil Society

2019 *CORPORATE* sponsors were;

Sam's Tours \$3,000

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SCUBA

With Sam's Tours!



Through our long time partnership with Sam's Tours, we have provided SCUBA certification training to over 50 youths! Thank you Sam for investing in our youth's development! As a reward for the youth's consistent commitment to do volunteer work with Ebiil, the mentors/ counselors are given an opportunity to get their SCUBA certification beginning at 14 years of age. SCUBA gives another window of opportunity to strengthen the youths' connectedness to our marine environment, further developing their sense of gratitude and respect to our ocean as it continues to nurture our lives as Palauans. It is a fact that most Palauans have not seen or experienced our ocean through SCUBA diving compared to our tourist visitors who spend thousands of dollars to gain such diving experience each year. Our connection to the ocean has been limited to harvesting or fishing instead of seeing the multitude of biodiversity that cohabitate beneath our waters, with such vibrant colors and shades that cannot even be witnessed on land. It is Ebiil's goal to reverse this trend by increasing the number of young people trained to SCUBA dive and perhaps taking even greater interest in marine biology and the protection of our ocean. Looking to you kids to save our oceans!