

## **PHYSICAL PROFILE**

Eastern Visayas or Region VIII is composed of the main Islands of Leyte, Biliran, and Samar joined by the famous 2.7 kilometers San Juanico Steel Bridge (Leyte – Samar) spanning across the San Juanico Strait. It is composed of six (6) provinces, namely: Leyte, Southern Leyte, Biliran, Samar (Western Samar), Eastern Samar and Northern Samar.

## **GEOLOGICAL “WONDERS”**

Biri group of Islands is a cluster of eight (8) islands and islets located at the northernmost part of Samar Island. It is one of the favorite destination of local and foreign tourist who marvel on its beautiful and impressive rock exposures, lagoons and overall sceneries. This is the reason why in 1996, the local Mines and Geosciences Bureau recommended that the island be declared as a GEOLOGICAL RESERVE/MONUMENT to preserve and protect the shoreline outcrops.

Sohoton Natural Bridge National park is located 25 kilometers northeast of Basey, Samar. It is known for the natural beauty of its caves, subterranean rivers, waterfalls and limestone formation. There is the magnificent stone bridge, from which the park got its name, connecting two mountain ridges where underneath flows the Sohoton River. Caves with unique and exquisite calcite formations are situated in towering and rugged limestone cliffs along the river. We have there the Panhulugan Cave I, the largest and most spectacular cave in the area, the Panhulugan II cave that cuts into Panhulugan Cliffs; Sohoton Cave, a very large cave with a cathedral-like cavern; Bugasan and Capigtan caves which are smaller caves with chambers where ancient remains had been found.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL OFFICE**

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau Regional Office No. 8 started as a Mineral District Office of the then Bureau of Mines and Geosciences Region 7 in Cebu City. Due to the developing mining industry in Eastern Visayas, particularly in the island of Samar, the Bureau and other concerned government agencies believed that there was a need for a BMG Office in Region 8.

On March 16, 1983, Bureau of Mines District Office in Tacloban City was created. The first two employees assigned to the Mineral District Office were an Officer-in-Charge and a geodetic computer. A pre-processing clerk soon followed. Its first office was accommodated by the National Economic and Development Authority at the second floor of their building in Candahug, Palo, Leyte. The Office was established to accept and pre-process mining rights applications within Region 8. Final processing, evaluation and approval was still in Region 7, Cebu City. Some employees from BMG Cebu City were assigned to train new employees here specifically those of the Mining Recording Section. It had two Officers-in-Charge on alternating schedule, Engrs. Alexander T. Ozoa and Constancio S. Nangkil, Jr.

In September of that same year, the District Office was transferred to T. Claudio corner M.H.Del Pilar St., Tacloban City.

By May 1984, the office had then an increased number of personnel as well as clients. Some BMG personnel from Cebu were detailed and eventually transferred to this region. Then the office moved to Sagkahan District of Tacloban City along the National Highway.

With the approval of Executive Order No. 192, “ The Reorganization Act of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources ” on June 10, 1987, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau was integrated to the DENR, hence, the Mines and Geosciences Development Services became one of the Sectoral Services of the DENR Regional Offices. The Sector had then two divisions: the Geology Division, and the Mining Services and Mineral Lands Management and Control Division. The MGDS Office was now transferred to Jones Extension adjacent to the DENR Regional Office where it stayed from February 11, 1988 to April 30, 1997. The sector was headed by a Regional Technical Director (RTD). In the span of seven years, the office had for its RTD’s the following: Federico E. Miranda, 1987-1989; Dario R. Miñoza (OIC), 1990; Augustus, L. Momongan, 1990-1992; Jose Madrona, 1992-1993; and Arnulfo V. Cabantog (OIC) 1993-1994.

RA 7942, otherwise known as the “Philippine Mining Act of 1995”, was approved on March 3, 1995. Under Sec. 100 of this Act, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau is transformed into a line bureau, and Sec. 7 of DAO 96-40 S. 1996 which is the Revised Implementing Rules and

Regulations of RA 7942, the MGDS became the Regional Offices of the MGB and are to be headed by Regional Directors. Thus, Mines and Geosciences Bureau RO-8 had for its RD, Alberto G. Jasareno (1994-1996). Arnulfo V. Cabantog was reassigned to this region as OIC Regional Director (1996-1997).

In May 1997, Regional Director Pedro L. de Leon was assigned to this office. Ten employees with items from the DENR Regional Office VIII were transferred and joined the 43 other employees of MGB RO-8. With the increased number of personnel, the Office transferred to a wider location, so it occupied the 2nd Floor of TCS Bldg., P. Burgos St. Tacloban City.

Sec. 3 of DAO 97-11, "Providing for a Line Organization of the MGB and other Purposes", states that the Regional Director shall discharge the mandate of the Bureau at the regional level. The Office of the Regional Director now exercised supervision over four divisions, namely: Administrative and Finance Division, Mine Management Division, Mining Environment and Safety Division, and the Geosciences Division.

On the last week of June 1998, the MGB RO-8 transferred to the Nipa Hut Compound at Lopez Jaena St.. It occupied the former Regional Office of the DOST. After a year, a new Regional Director, Eligio Z. Ariate, headed the office. Under his supervision are the four divisions with their respective division chiefs, to wit : Ruth R. Pono, Chief, Administrative & Finance Division; Rafael M. Bernardo, Mining Operations Officer, Chief, Mine Management Division; Prudencio C. Bulawan, Jr., Chief, Mining Environment and Safety Division, and James S. Leones, Chief, Geosciences Division. At present, this office has a total of 71 itemized positions.

On May 29, 2002, Department S0.2002-391 was issued by Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez reassigning Eligio Z. Ariate as Regional Director for MGB R07 and designated Loreto B. Alburo as OIC-Regional Director of this Region and on December 19, 2005 Alburo was promoted to Director II.

On October 2007, MGB-RO8 due to the demand to vacate by the former owner of the Nipa Hut which is the family of the congressman of the 1st district of Leyte, the office transferred to its present location at Ecarma Building, Brgy. Candahug, Palo, Leyte.

Fortunately, MGB-R08 was able to acquire a lot for its office building. DENR-R08 with the conformity and approval of the members of the PAMB Leyte, a 1,000 square meters lot which is a portion of the proclaimed national Park near MacArthur memorial shrine at Brgy. Candahug, Palo, Leyte was donated, timely with the approval of the proposed Capital Outlay of MGB-R08 for C.Y 2009, amounting to 6.6 million. Before the end of 4th quarter C.Y 2009, the construction of the building started and it is now completed but not fully.

A 2.2M Laboratory Building for the Bagacay Rehabilitation Project was constructed at the back of the regional office building and is now nearing its completion. Likewise, concrete steel fence, concrete pavement and drainage canal have also been constructed within the perimeter of the 3.525 sq.m. total area (to include the latest lot acquisition) within the MacArthur Landing Memorial National Park (MLMNP) requested for office structures/facilities.

On May 20, 2009, S.O. # 2009-259 again was issued by DENR Secretary Joselito Atienza reassigning RD Loreto B. Alburo as Regional Director for MGB-R03 and designating RD Danilo U. Uykieng as OIC-Regional Director of this Region in less than a year . On January 2010 Department S.O. # 2010-02 dated January 6, 2010 was issued by DENR Secretary Horacio C. Ramos recalling Atty. Danilo U. Uykieng to MGB-CO. Legal Division his home base, and designating RD Roger A. De Dios as OIC-Regional Director of MGB Region-8. On February 2010, RD Roger A. De Dios was promoted to Director II. In compliance with S.O.#2012-669, dated September 05, 2012, office responsibilities and accountabilities were turnover from Regional Director Roger A. de Dios to OIC-RD Alfredo T. Relampagos from MGB Regional Office-X on September 17, 2012. On September 26, 2012, MGB Director Leo L. Jasareno issued an Special Order No.2012-731 assigning RD Alilo C. Ensomo, Jr. as Acting Regional Director of MGB-Region-8.

#### **Past RTDs**

- Federico E. Miranda 1987 - 1989
- Dario R. Miñoza (OIC) 1990
- Augustus L. Momongan 1990 – 1992

- Jose D. Madrona 1992 – 1993
- Arnulfo V. Cabantog (OIC) 1993
- Alberto G. Jasareno 1994 – 1996
- Arnulfo V. Cabantug (OIC) 1996 - 1997

**Past RDs**

- Pedro L. de Leon 1997 - 1999
- Eligio Z. Ariate 1999 – 2002
- Loreto B. Alburo 2002 – 2009 (May)
- Danilo U. Uykieng (OIC) May 2009 – Jan. 2010
- Roger A. De Dios Feb. 2010 – Sept. 2012
- Alfredo T. Relampagos Sept. 17 – Oct. 2, 2012
- Alilo C. Ensomo, Jr. October 2012 – Present

**Present Division Chiefs**

- Admin and Finance Division - Rebecca F. Precia (OIC)
- Mine Management Division - Romulo C. Babatugon (OIC-Chief)
- Mining Environment and Safety Division - Nonita S. Caguioa (OIC-Chief)
- Geosciences Division - Ceferino M. Dela Cruz (OIC)

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**MGB: More than a century of championing sustainability in mining and geosciences**

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau dates back during the Spanish regime, known as the "Inspeccion General de Minas." It took charge of the administration and disposition of minerals and mineral lands. The Office, however, was abolished on July 1, 1886 but its functions and personnel were merged with the General Directorate of Civil Administration.

Under the Philippine Revolutionary Republic, the Departamento de Fomento, translated as Department of Public Welfare was created by virtue of the decree signed by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo on November 28, 1898. On November 29, 1898, the President signed a decree creating the four (4) divisions of Departamento de Fomento and one of these divisions was the Industry and Agriculture Division. The Mines Section and the Mountains Sections were also formed, wherein the former was under the director of Industry and Agriculture, and latter was under the director of Publicas.

However, when the Americans came, a reorganization was implemented resulting in the emergence of the Mining Bureau by virtue of General Order No. 31, dated March 10, 1900. As part of the reorganization, the administration of mining grants and claims instituted prior to April 11, 1899 was transferred by Act No. 916 from the Mining Bureau to the Public Lands.

In 1905, the Mining Bureau and the Bureau of Government Laboratories were fused under the Bureau of Science, and the Mining Bureau became the Division of Geology and Mines.

By virtue of Memorandum Order No. 5 dated January 25, 1933, the Mineral Lands Division of the Bureau of Lands was merged with the Division of Geology and Mines under the Bureau of Science to form a division known as the Division of Mineral Resources under the Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

The Division of Mineral Resources was charged with functions of carrying out the provisions of three major laws: (1) provisions of the Act of US Congress 1902 pertaining to mineral lands, and the governance of the leasing and development of coal lands; (2) provisions of Act No. 3077, as amended by Act No. 3852, governing the exploration, location and lease of petroleum; and (3) Act No. 2719

governing mineral oils and gas.

On September 19, 1934, the same division was again placed under the direct supervision and control of the Bureau of Science. It was renamed Division of Mines.

With the promulgation of the Commonwealth Constitution reverting the Regalian Doctrine—which particularly asserts that mineral belongs to the State and their disposition, administration, exploitation, and development shall be done through license, concession, or lease—Commonwealth Act No. 136 and 137 were both enacted on November 7, 1936. Commonwealth Act 136 created the Bureau of Mines, while Commonwealth Act No. 137, otherwise known as the Mining Act of 1936, was actually the first major mining law that would stay for about 38 years until Presidential Decree 463.

When the Second World War came, the Bureau of Mines was reconstituted under the Department of Agriculture and Commerce by virtue of Executive Order No. 1 dated January 30, 1942. In 1944, during the Puppet Philippine Republic, the Bureau of Mines shrunk again into a Division of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The Bureau of Mines was restored in 1945 when the Philippine Commonwealth was re-established on February 27 of the same year. Since then, the Bureau of Mines had been under the direct supervision and control of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

It was only in 1974 that the Bureau of Mines was transferred to the Department of Natural Resources pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 461. On the same day, the Mineral Resources Decree of 1974, or PD No. 463, was issued, amending Commonwealth Act No. 137 to provide among others for a modernized system of administration and disposition of mineral lands and to promote and encourage the development and exploration of the mining industry. PD No. 463 was later revised by PD Nos. 1385 and 1677.

On June 6, 1978, PD No. 1281 was promulgated revising Commonwealth Act No. 136 boosting the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences Bureau with additional tasks as well as authority to make it more responsive to the objectives of the government for its minerals sector.

A year after, some sections of PD No. 1281 was amended by PD No. 1654 to include renaming the Bureau of Mines as Bureau of Mines and Geosciences further making it more responsive to its varied functions.

On June 10, 1987, pursuant to Executive Order No. 192, otherwise known as Reorganization Act of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the MGB became one of the staff bureaus of DENR. MGB took the functions of the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences but minus the line functions that were transferred mainly to the DENR regional offices. It also absorbed the functions of the abolished Mineral Resources Development Board (MRDB), and the Gold Mining Industry Assistance Board (GMIAB).

The passage of Republic Act 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 on March 3, 1995, and DAO No. 96-40, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 7942, transformed the MGB into a line bureau. The staff bureau created under DAO 1, series of 1988 became the Central Office of the MGB, while Mines and Geosciences Development Service created under DAO 41, series of 1991 became the Regional Offices.

In 1997, by virtue of DAO 97-11, the MGB implemented a full reorganization specifically involving the establishment of two new divisions—the Mining Environment and Safety Division, and the Mine Tenement Management Division—thus, essentially operationalizing the sustainable development principles provision of the Mining Act of 1995.

The year after, the MGB commemorated its centennial year and from then on celebrated its anniversary every 28th of November. MGB's acknowledgement as one of the centennial bureaus further underscored the significance of the State's management of our mineral resources throughout the decades. Likewise, the long history of MGB has only proven its unwavering commitment in championing sustainability in mining and geosciences.