



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NURTURING OUR AQUATIC HERITAGE WITH PROJECT N.O.A.H.

A GROUP OF IMPASSIONED marine scientists, dive professionals, and environmentalists are spearheading the most ambitious and innovative conservation project in Singapore's waters to date.

Their vision: to create a thriving, healthy, and filtered coral reef in the lagoon enclosed by Pulau Hantu, an island originally 2.4ha in size, but reclaimed and expanded to 12.4ha for recreational purposes.

Pulau Hantu is the most popular, and accessible among Singapore's southern islands. N.O.A.H.'s creators aim to provide a protected sanctuary here for the marine eco-system and its surroundings to thrive, and especially for indigenous species of fauna to flourish.

A general survey of Pulau Hantu's fringing and patch reefs in its entirety has never been performed on a national scale. Initial conservation activities include coral relocation, detailed surveying and documenting of existing marine life around Pulau Hantu, and identifying key areas to protect from further environmental degradation.

The goal is to prove that preservation of our local natural heritage is possible even for a rapidly growing country such as Singapore, where innovative ideas and practices can help to minimise some of the damaging effects of industrial development.

The implementation of Project N.O.A.H. recognises the urgency for such an undertaking. Not only do our waters sustain one of the most biologically diverse natural reefs, which are at risk of permanent damage, it can also provide for huge sources of income and add major economic value to our society.

Indeed, the challenge at hand goes beyond building an aquatic safe-house whose objectives serve the interests of conservation, science, research and education. Project N.O.A.H. also considers the potential for enhancing economic growth and sustainability in the areas of industry, leisure, tourism and commerce.

Project N.O.A.H brings together for the first time the public, private and people sectors in a national effort to protect and to mitigate the negative environmental impacts on ecologically sensitive zones.

Project N.O.A.H. is led by the Singapore Underwater Federation and supported by its partners the Singapore Environment Council, Nature Society, Singapore, and Aquos Pte Ltd. Project sponsors are Shell Companies in Singapore and One°15 Marina Club.



Project N.O.A.H. will be completed in the following three stages:

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed survey of reefs around Pulau Hantu to take stock of natural biodiversity and to identify threatened and enriched areas. • Collect qualitative data on marine and coastal biodiversity to determine existence and occurrence of significant species of marine animals around Pulau Hantu's reefs. • Study conducted over 400 dives covering 3.2 km of reef, spanning a period of three to six months. • Includes identification of significant species of vertebrates, invertebrates, aquatic plants and corals. • Begin training of scientific divers, reaping immediate educational benefits for volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following documentation of Pulau Hantu's reefs, N.O.A.H. will fan out to other coastal areas and survey Singapore's remaining reefs. • Study, develop and implement passive and active mechanisms to reduce negative environmental impacts such as siltation and sedimentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement community outreach programmes to educate the general public on the value of natural marine heritage.



BACKGROUND ON PROJECT N.O.A.H.

1. Reasons for Preservation

- Sovereignty
- Education and engagement
- Scientific discoveries
- Apply existing knowledge and create technological breakthroughs
- Value-add to economy and society
- Improving quality of life

2. Objectives in Brief

- To survey and document existing marine life around Pulau Hantu.
- To implement measures to protect key areas from further degradation (active and passive measures to condition waters)
- To enrich existing marine life in selected areas (coral relocation)
- In achieving the above objectives, to administer an on-going marine conservation / education / appreciation programme for schools and general public.
- In realising success of the N.O.A.H. project, to replicate in other marine areas identified around our shores.

3. Long-term Goals in Brief

- To enrich Singapore's only recreational dive location by 2008.
- To enable a world-class Natural Marine Life educational facility.
- To empower local replication of N.O.A.H. type projects around Singapore and within the region.
- To encourage the co-existence of marine conservation and industrial development, thus providing a healthy model for others to follow.



WHAT THE PARTNERS OF PROJECT N.O.A.H. SAY

Dr. GEH Min, Nominated Member of Parliament, and President, Nature Society, Singapore

- ❖ "This is true Blue Ocean Strategy or thinking out of the box: An entrepreneurial project that seeks to constructively resolve competing claims and uses in Singapore's southern waters and by doing so, create more space for Singaporeans to work, live and play not just on land but in the sea. If it succeeds, it could have the effect of a miracle drug to ailing seas and oceans not just locally or in the region but globally."

Mr. Arthur TAY, Chairman, ONE°15 Marina Club

- ❖ "This was an initiative we simply had to be involved in. N.O.A.H. will be a high visibility project, which will enhance and improve the quality of life for those actively involved in the boating and diving community, as well as the public at large. Preserving Singapore's marine heritage and environment is an endeavour which ONE°15 Marina Club wholeheartedly supports and endorses."

Ms. Mavis Kuek, GM External Affairs, Shell Companies in Singapore

- ❖ "Shell is committed to sustainable development, that is, we aim to achieve economic growth while protecting the environment and benefiting the communities in which we operate. We are therefore pleased to support this project and to contribute towards preserving Singapore's marine heritage. We believe that through this project and the combined efforts of government agencies, companies, nature groups and the academia, we can leverage on our expertise and strengths to meet the environment challenge."

Professor CHOU Loke Ming, Dept of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore

- ❖ "With my expertise in coral reef biology, I will advise on the ecological aspects of the rejuvenation of Pulau Hantu lagoon in my personal capacity. I believe that such a challenging project is worth attempting as it will demonstrate the possibility of enhancing a habitat through proper approaches involving the biological and engineering sciences. I firmly believe that it is time to do something."

Dr. SIN Tsai Ming, Tropical Marine Science Institute, National University of Singapore

- ❖ "I am very pleased that the project has come as far as it has so rapidly, and has garnered so much support from both conservationists and the scientific community. This project challenges marine scientists to create, from their academic expertise, a practical working system that is largely self-sustaining. If successful, this will be a great resource for Singaporeans to learn about their natural heritage and to experience first-hand the wonders of a coral reef ecosystem."

Mr. TAY Kheng Soon, Architect

- ❖ "In my diving days in the 50s and 60s in Singapore waters, I was impressed by the sheer variety of corals compared to other places in South-East Asia. But the visibility was seldom clear except for three or four times a year, when the tide was slack and there was no rain. This project will be a great boon to research and visitors."



Mr. Stephen LAU, Engineer

- ❖ "The challenge of the engineering/architectural team was to produce a scheme closely matching the bold and exciting ideas that grew out of N.O.A.H. Many outside the team eagerly shared their ideas in this highly unique project. The final scheme, which incorporates everyone's thumbprint, has wide endorsement. A key element in the design, i.e., usage of huge side-stream tidal filters to change water clarity will require modelling and testing. Other noteworthy features of the scheme did aim at achieving zero power-zero manning requirements and minimal maintenance."

Mr. Benny YEO, President, Singapore Underwater Federation President

- ❖ "The Singapore Underwater Federation is most pleased to be the lead organization in Project N.O.A.H. We are especially grateful to the Project's sponsors for providing funds and logistical support essential to both the development of effective training programmes for citizen scientist divers participating in Pulau Hantu's reef survey, and the means to provide safe diving operations. This is an exciting and appreciated opportunity for SUF members to contribute back to a heritage that provides for them so much pleasure and enjoyment."

Mr. LEONG Kwok Peng, Head, Marine Conservation, Nature Society, Singapore

- ❖ "I imagine the results of Project N.O.A.H would serve as a great outdoor classroom for young and old – a place for marine eco-camps for students and the community at large. N.O.A.H. would also help in some ways to raise the conservation status of Pulau Hantu."



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