

Fiji Times Article

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A Unique opportunity has started in the North where two villages in Druadrua Island namely Salavukoso, Delaivadra and Vunivutu Village are going to plant Coral that will be marketed overseas by Walt Smith International (Fiji) Ltd.

Director Walt Smith has guaranteed the village that they will invest in these Villages by providing all necessary equipment and training for this unique export.

Couple Walt and Deborah Smith are the first in the world to do commercial Coral farming back in 1998 in the Yasawas and since that beginning more than sixteen countries worldwide have followed their groundbreaking example.

They are here in the North this week to hold the first workshops and training program that will support this initiative to the people at village level and allow them to participate in the global trade.

Three months from now the corals from the North will be marketed to the world through the channels that WSI has established in the past seventeen years here in Fiji.

“We want to create opportunity to the community here in the North through sustainable harvest and at the same time create more habitat for the environment through these efforts” said Deborah Smith

These corals are harvested in a sustainable way said Walt Smith

“The village will gain from this three year community project whereby they will be paid bi-monthly for the coral purchased by our company which will take three months to mature. The environment will also gain because over 50% of what is planted will be used to reseed the reef creating more coral coverage then when we began”

WSI’s coral biologist Taitusi Vuataki and Cameron Bee will be in Vunivutu village this week to assist the villages in coral farming before going out to Druadrua Island next week, said Walt Smith. “This is part of our commitment to them to make sure the project is a success”

“Turaga ni Yavusa” Salavukoso village on the island of Druadrua Tevita Rokuta has welcomed the project that will help these villages.

I am very happy that we getting this one of a kind opportunity to be planting Corals with the help of Mr. Walt Smith and it will be the source of income to these villages.

Vunivutu spokesperson Ilisoni Lalai said that “during this difficult time we are expereincing we applaud the implementing of the project that will boost the Village community income as a whole and in their children’s education about the coral reef, and contribute to the ‘vanua”.