

DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
No. 2019-\_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
CAVE MANAGEMENT, PROTECTION, AND  
CONSERVATION PROGRAM (CMPCP)**

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9072 otherwise known as the “National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act” and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, and consistent with the Philippine Development Plan (2017-2022), the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2028), and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and other relevant laws, rules, and regulations, the Cave Management, Protection, and Conservation Program (CMPCP) is hereby issued:

**Section 1. Basic Policy**

It is the policy of the State to protect, conserve and manage caves and cave resources, along with the surrounding karsts, as part of the country’s natural wealth and heritage and to promote the right to a healthful and balanced ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

**Section 2. Scope and Coverage**

This Order shall apply to all cave, cave resources, and surrounding karsts in the Philippines.

**Section 3. Cave Management, Protection, and Conservation Program**

The Cave Management, Protection, and Conservation Program (CMPCP) is a national program which aims to comprehensively manage, address and effectively reduce the drivers and threats of degradation of caves, cave resources, and surrounding karsts; to conserve their biological, aesthetic, archaeological, paleontological, historic, recreational, scientific, and educational value; and to promote the sustainability of cave and karst landscape ecosystem services and climate change resiliency for the benefit of present and future generations. Under the CMPCP, management, protection, and conservation shall be anchored on the following approaches:

- a. Integrated and Holistic Management
- b. Application of Gender Equity Principles
- c. Partnership Building
- d. Ecotourism/Sustainable Tourism
- e. Protection, Management and Law Enforcement
- f. Communication, Education and Public Awareness

- g. Valuation of Ecosystem Services
- h. Application of Precautionary Principle

#### **Section 4. Objectives**

The general objective of the CMPCP is to achieve the effective management of the country's caves and karst landscapes in order to maintain and conserve biodiversity, to promote sustainable resource use, and to enhance appreciation of their biological, natural, cultural, and historic values.

Specifically, the Program aims to:

- a. Establish a registry of cave and karst landscapes to ensure the effective and sustainable management of cave resources;
- b. Implement sustainable management of cave and karst landscape ecosystems;
- c. Effectively reduce threats and factors of degradation of cave and karst landscape ecosystems;
- d. Enhance the formation of positive values among all stakeholders including the youth through shared responsibilities in sustainable management of caves and karst landscape ecosystems; and
- e. Develop and/or enhance skills of DENR staff as well as other stakeholders on cave and karst landscape ecosystem management.

#### **Section 5. Program Management and Supervision**

The DENR Secretary shall exercise overall management and supervision of the CMPCP. The DENR Regional Offices shall take the lead in the implementation of the Program, with the technical assistance and guidance from the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). They shall engage in collaborative partnership with the Department of Tourism, the National Museum, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, other National Government Agencies, local government units, the academe, civil society organizations, and/or other stakeholders in the implementation of the Program.

#### **Section 6. Institutional Mechanism for Advisory Bodies**

The National, Regional, and Provincial Cave Committees created pursuant to Section 11 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-29 and Special Order No. 2016-654 shall have the following functions:

a. The National Cave Committee (NCC) shall formulate policies/plans and programs for the CMPCP. It shall also act as an advisory body to the Secretary on matters relating to the CMPCP.

b. The Regional Cave Committee (RCC), created by the Regional Directors in their respective region, shall be chaired by the Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services and co-chaired by the Regional Director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau with members coming from different local coordinating agencies/offices, academe, and non-government organizations. The RCC shall assist the NCC in the implementation of CMPCP, and other cave-related plans, programs, and policies. Decisions of the RCC shall be affirmed by the Regional Director. Where the cave is located within a protected area, the RCC shall be constituted as a Special Committee within the PAMB to give advice to PAMB for matters relating to caves and cave resources.

c. Except for Palawan, the DENR Regional Director may create a Provincial Cave Committee (PCC) for island provinces as appropriate. It shall be chaired by the DENR PENRO with members coming from different local agencies, academe, and non-government organizations. The PCC shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the RCC. Decisions of the PCC shall be affirmed by the Regional Director. The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development shall serve as the PCC for Palawan for purposes of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the CMPCP.

## **Section 7. Program Components**

The Program shall consist of the following components:

a. **Cave and Cave Resource Inventory and Assessment** – this shall include inventory, mapping, delineation, and marking of boundaries, and classification of caves as well as the documentation of biological, geological, hydrological, paleontological, archaeological, historical, and other cave resources, including the identification, characterization and analysis of threats affecting them. Following the assessment is the selection of potential sites for establishing Protected Areas and/or World Heritage Sites based on a set of criteria, including bio-geographical, ecological, spatial, social, socio-economic, and political considerations, among others. Ecological, institutional, and social components will be considered.

b. **Management Plan Development** – this shall include crafting of a sound Cave Management Plan for each cave and surrounding karsts through full community involvement and multi-stakeholder participation in the development and implementation. This shall also include cave resource management and utilization, visitor management, mainstreaming climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and business and financing mechanisms in each Cave Management Plan.

c. **Maintenance and Protection** – this includes the development schemes to promote cooperation, coordination and partnerships among different stakeholders including the enhancement of caves in existing protected areas and to provide support in the protection of cave and karst landscape ecosystems. It shall also include the restoration of damaged and disturbed cave and karst landscape ecosystems by protecting and allowing ecosystems to recover naturally or use of technologies grounded on scientific basis and consistent with the overall management goals.

d. **Biodiversity-Friendly Social Enterprise Development** – this shall involve the conduct of economic activities and practices of micro, small and medium enterprises, LGUs and People’s Organizations that promote the sustainable use of caves, cave resources, and adjacent land for consumptive and non-consumptive use; create wealth and value; and open opportunities for the equitable sharing of benefits among stakeholders. The provision of these livelihood options shall help sustain the community support on all cave and karst landscape management efforts.

e. **Capacity Building** – this shall be the training of concerned DENR staff at the national and regional/field offices and of the members of the Regional and Provincial Cave Committees to develop their skills and expertise on cave and karst landscape management.

f. **Technical Assistance** – the capacity building trainings received by the DENR personnel and of the members of the Regional and Provincial Cave Committees shall be cascaded to the LGUs, other stakeholders, and partners in the field. The DENR may engage the services of a third party to provide assistance with regards to the sustainable financing or alternative livelihood for the concerned stakeholders.

g. **Research and Development** – the Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau of the DENR shall conduct research and policy studies on caves and cave resources. The BMB shall provide logistical support and coordinate with academic and research institutions for cave research and development programs and speleological field studies.

h. **Knowledge Management** – a knowledge management platform shall be developed to serve as a repository of all data and information on the cave and karst landscape including the results of the assessments. This shall be used to generate useful information for the management of cave and karst landscape biodiversity.

i. **Social Marketing and Mobilization** – a well-designed communication framework, strategies, and approaches shall be developed to promote public awareness, instill social and environmental consciousness, and effect behavior change with regard to the cave and karst landscape ecosystems. This shall include establishment of linkages among all stakeholders, and Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) surveys, among others.

j. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – the DENR Policy and Planning Service in collaboration with the BMB shall conduct periodic monitoring and assessment of the CMPCP.

## **Section 8. Appointment of Cave Protection Enforcement Officers**

Where the DENR enters into a Memorandum of Agreement with an LGU for the conservation, management, and protection of caves and cave resources outside NIPAS areas, the concerned DENR Regional Office shall deputize the Cave Protection Enforcement Officers (CPEOs) from locally-based non-government organizations (NGOs), peoples' organizations (POs) and other volunteers in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

## **Section 9. Reporting**

The Regional Offices shall prepare and submit periodic reports on the progress and status of Program implementation to the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, copy furnished to the Director of BMB.

The NCC through the BMB shall submit to the DENR Secretary an annual report on the progress of the CMPCP.

## **Section 10. Issuance of Clarificatory Guidelines**

The BMB shall develop and issue clarificatory guidelines or technical bulletins to effectively carry out the different components of the Program.

## **Section 11. Funding and Budgetary Requirements**

The DENR shall allocate funds to support the full implementation of the CMPCP.

## **Section 12. Separability Clause**

If any clause, sentence or provision of this Order is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts which are not affected shall remain valid and enforceable.

**Section 13. Repealing Clause**

This Order shall supersede DENR Administrative Order No. 1994-04 and Section 11 of DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-29. All rules, regulations, circulars, instructions, memoranda, orders, or portions thereof which are inconsistent herewith, are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**Section 14. Effectivity**

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgement of receipt of a copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR) of UP Law Center.

**ROY A. CIMATU**  
Secretary