SGD 15: Indicator 15.2.1

1. University President Ponce Speaks at EMBC Summit 2025; DOrSU Strengthens Role as Project Partner



Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) President Dr. Roy G. Ponce served as a plenary speaker at the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor (EMBC) Summit 2025, held on October 6-8 at Caraga State University in Butuan City. Speaking in Plenary Session 2 themed "Biodiversity and Communities: Strengthening Conservation Connectivity (Science-Based)," Dr. Ponce presented the EMBC Biodiversity Profile of Davao de Oro and Davao Oriental.

Dr. Ponce's presentation directly advanced the Summit's goal of translating science into action under the Biodiversity Corridor (BD Corridor) Project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As one of the project partners, DOrSU is helping build the evidence base for integrated ecosystem management from ridge-to-reef monitoring and habitat connectivity analysis to local capacity building and policy support for biodiversity-friendly livelihoods.

The session also featured regional and international experts whose complementary work reinforced the corridor approach. From insect biodiversity baselines that flag sensitive habitats to province-level biodiversity profiles, the shared datasets are informing priorities for restoration and protection, as well as the identification of Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) that contribute to national targets and the global 30×30 goal.

The program continues through October 8, with Ms. Amy G. Ponce, DOrSU Project Leader for EMBC Clusters

5 & 6, set to present the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor Conservation Plan for Davao de Oro and Davao Oriental. The day's agenda will also tackle DHSUD XIII priority programs, eco-tourism opportunities in the Mindanao Corridor, LGU-led OECMs, and the Caraga Provinces Conservation Plan—tying technical planning to implementing agencies, specific sites, and community initiatives.

DOrSU faculty-researchers are also slated to present studies across four clusters: (1) Biodiversity Assessment, Species Movement and Conservation of Flora; (2) Biodiversity Assessment, Species Movement and Conservation of Fauna; (3) Socioeconomic Dimensions including GAD initiatives in biodiversity conservation; and (4) CLUP/Special Area Studies (Biodiversity). These papers expand the corridor's knowledge base, guide local development planning, and support community-based stewardship in critical habitats.

DOrSU's strong presence at the EMBC Summit advances the University's regenerative futures vision and GROWTH Agenda, underscoring its role as a reliable science partner for government, communities, and conservation networks in Eastern Mindanao. As sessions progress, DOrSU's team is coordinating with partners to share datasets, align conservation priorities with LGU plans, and scale training and monitoring programs across key landscapes.

Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU), led by President Dr. Roy G. Ponce, participated in the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor (EMBC) Summit 2025 held on October 6–8 at Caraga State University in Butuan City. Dr. Ponce served as a plenary speaker, presenting the biodiversity profile of Davao de Oro and Davao Oriental and highlighting science-based approaches to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem connectivity.

As a partner in the DENR-led Biodiversity Corridor Project, supported by GEF and UNDP, DOrSU contributes research, biodiversity assessments, habitat monitoring, conservation planning, and community capacity building. Its faculty-researchers are also presenting studies on flora, fauna, species conservation, socioeconomic dimensions, gender and development, and biodiversity-focused land-use planning.

Through these initiatives, DOrSU strengthens collaboration with government agencies, local communities, and conservation partners to identify priority areas for protection, promote biodiversity-friendly livelihoods, and support sustainable local development.

Overall, DOrSU's active participation reinforces its commitment to biodiversity conservation, its GROWTH Agenda, and its vision of advancing regenerative futures through science-based research and community-driven environmental stewardship.

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/university-president-ponce-speaks-at-embc-summit-2025-dorsu-strengthens-role-as-project-partner

2. 3rd UASR 2025 Showcases GROWTH 2029 Agenda



Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) is set to hold the 3rd University Annual Scientific Review (UASR) on November 17–18, 2025, at Honey's Hotel, Matiao, City of Mati. Anchored on the theme "GROWTH 2029 in Action: Globalization, Research, Innovation, and Holistic Development towards a Future-Ready University," this year's UASR brings together faculty researchers, student innovators, and extension practitioners to showcase the University's expanding research landscape.

The UASR is an annual initiative spearheaded by the University's Research, Innovation, and Extension Division designed to highlight groundbreaking research, celebrate scientific achievements, and promote regenerative solutions for communities. It provides a platform for DOrSU faculty, students, and partners to present their research through oral and poster presentations, demonstrating the University's commitment to knowledge creation and innovation.

This year, a total of sixty-three (63) scientific papers will be presented across two major tracks:
Track 1: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Applied Research
Track 2: Social Innovation, Governance, and Education

In addition to the research presentations, the 3rd UASR integrates a Training–Workshop on Foresight and Foresafety, equipping participants with advanced tools and frameworks for futures thinking, risk anticipation, and strategic planning—core elements that support DOrSU's Regenerative Futures Vision 2035 and the GROWTH 2029 Agenda.

DOrSU invites faculty, students, partners, and stakeholders to support and take part in this year's University Annual Scientific Review and celebrate research breakthroughs, innovative solutions, and extension initiatives that create lasting impact for communities and future generations.

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/3rd-uasr-2025-showcases-growth-2029-agenda

3. DOrSU wraps up coffee project assessment, brings holiday cheer to quake-hit farmer-beneficiaries



Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) completed a three-day monitoring and evaluation visit for its community-based coffee initiative in Sitio Matabang, Taocanga, Manay, pairing the field assessment with a gift-giving activity for coffee farmer-beneficiaries.

Organized in partnership with the National Service Training Program (NSTP), the activity, held on December 12–14, 2025, was part of the University's extension program, "Empowering Indigenous Communities through Regenerative Agriculture, Biodiversity, and Culture." The visit was led by Dr. Mary Fil M. Bauyot, Program Leader, with Ms. Laarni Pasion, Assistant Program Leader, alongside Ms. Jeni A. Nicolas, Director of the Cooperative Development Center, Mr. Renie Bancale, head of the Monitoring and Evaluation unit, and support staff from DOrSU's Research, Innovation, and Extension office.

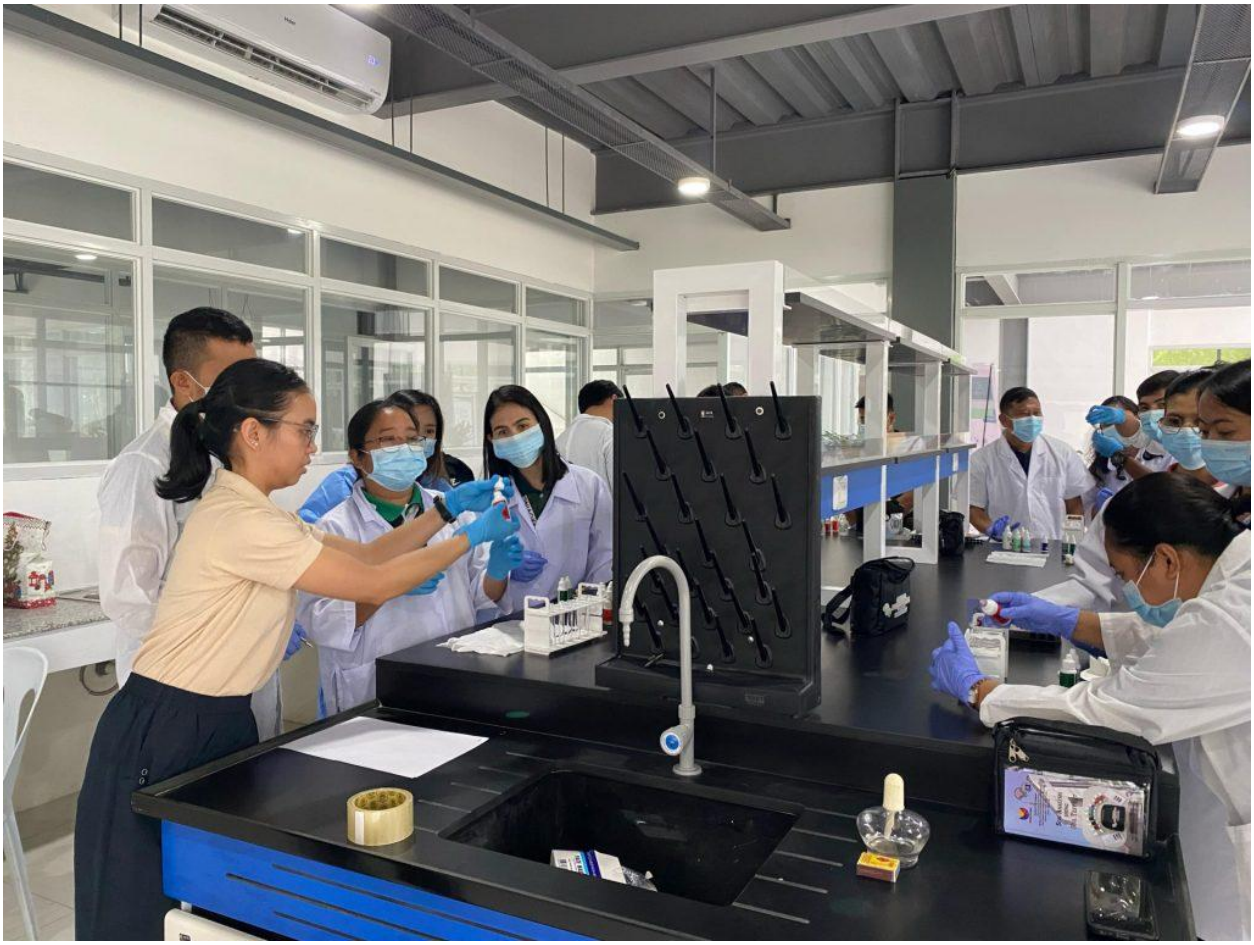
The field work focused on checking on the condition and progress of the coffee sites, documenting developments on the ground, and identifying any gaps where farmers may need additional support as the project continues. This round of monitoring also included a gift-giving activity, which organizers described as a simple way to lift spirits and share holiday cheer with coffee farmer-beneficiaries, especially in the wake of the October 2025 doublet earthquake that struck Davao Oriental and affected communities across the province.

The coffee initiative in Sitio Matabang is part of DOrSU's broader push to advance regenerative agriculture in partner communities. In January 2025, the University earlier led the ceremonial planting of 30,000 coffee seedlings in the area, laying the groundwork for a community-based coffee farm aimed at supporting household income while encouraging farming practices that protect soil health and surrounding biodiversity. A follow-up monitoring activity was conducted in May, which included checking plantation conditions and geo-tagging of planting sites to improve documentation and tracking.

The project team will continue on-site monitoring and evaluation as the coffee stands develop, to track progress in the field and help safeguard the project's long-term gains for the community.

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/dorsu-wraps-up-coffee-project-assessment-brings-holiday-cheer-to-quake-hit-farmer-beneficiaries

4. DA–BSWM, DOrSU Team Up for Soil Testing Training and Laboratory Compliance



Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Soils and Water Management (DA – BSWM) and Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU), a member of the Philippines National Soil and Laboratory Network (PhilNASOLAN), further strengthened their partnership through a series of activities aimed at enhancing soil fertility management and ensuring compliance with laboratory quality standards.

On February 12, 2025, the University Research Complex – Institute for Soil and Water (UResCom – iSaW), with support from the Department of Agriculture – Regional Soils Laboratory (DA-RSL) XI, successfully conducted hands-on training on soil testing using Soil Test Kit (STK). Held at the UResCom in Marfori, Don Enrique Lopez, City of Mati, Davao Oriental, the event brought together faculty members and students from DOrSU's main and extension campuses, representatives from Local Government Units (LGUs), personnel from the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAGRO) – Davao Oriental, and farm owners and members of agricultural cooperatives.

The training provided participants with essential soil testing knowledge and skills, serving as a crucial step in conducting soil fertility mapping for high-value crops in Davao Oriental, which further aims to generate data that will support precision agriculture. The sessions were led by experts from BSWM's Laboratory Services Division (LSD), including Ms. Keyfej Ramos, a registered chemist, and Mr. Anito Tisado Jr., a licensed agriculturist.

Meanwhile, a team from DA-BSWM conducted an on-site evaluation of the Institute for Soil and Water (iSAW) laboratory to inspect its compliance with Presidential Decree 1435, which mandates strict quality standards

for soil and water testing laboratories. Led by Ms. Sheila Mae Bautista and Engr. Alexander Areta, the inspection aimed to ensure the facility meets the necessary technical and operational requirements.

DOrSU President Dr. Roy G. Ponce has made a firm commitment to fully implement the recommendations provided by the DA-BSWM technical team. This commitment, shared by UResCom Supervisor Dr. Wilanfranco C. Tayone and iSaW Associate Supervisor Dr. Janeth C. Tayone, signifies a proactive approach to ensuring the iSAW laboratory operates at the highest possible standards.

Anchored in the university's regenerative futures vision, these ongoing initiatives stand as a testament to DOrSU's commitment to advancing regenerative agricultural practices and empowering communities through scientific innovation. By equipping local stakeholders with essential knowledge and skills and upholding the highest standards in soil and water analysis, DOrSU actively fosters regenerative development, ensuring ecological balance, economic prosperity, and social well-being for the communities of Davao Oriental.

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/da-bswm-dorsu-team-up-for-soil-testing-training-and-laboratory-compliance

4. DOrSU Shares Insights at the First-ever PAMB Summit 2024





Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) made significant contributions at the first-ever Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) Summit, held on November 21-22, 2024, at Adelina Hotel and Suites in the City of Mati. The summit, organized by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office – Davao Oriental (PENRO DavOr) in collaboration with the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Corridor (EMBC) Project, brought together key stakeholders to discuss critical concerns in biodiversity conservation and protected area management in the province.

As a plenary speaker, DOrSU President Dr. Roy G. Ponce, presented the university's research initiatives focused on the conservation of protected areas throughout Davao Oriental. He emphasized the university's role in fostering partnerships with local government units and other stakeholders to promote conservation priorities. Dr. Ponce also discussed how DOrSU's research efforts have been instrumental in providing the scientific foundation for sound environmental policies and conservation strategies in the region.

Additionally, Asst. Prof. Jhonnel P. Villegas delivered a plenary talk titled "Human-Wildlife Interactions: Cultural Sensitivities and Perspectives Influence the Conservation of the Philippine Brown Deer," where he highlighted the complex relationship between the Mandaya Indigenous Community and the Philippine Brown Deer. Asst. Prof. Villegas illustrated how cultural practices and traditional knowledge play an essential role in biodiversity conservation. His talk emphasized the importance of integrating local perspectives into conservation strategies to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

DOrSU's active involvement in the summit underscores its important role as a member of the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary Protected Area Management Board (MHRWS-PAMB). As part of the board, DOrSU is involved in research, advocacy, and collaborative efforts to ensure the conservation and protection of the sanctuary's diverse ecosystems.

This participation aligns with DOrSU's broader commitment to advancing regenerative futures. With its regenerative futures vision, the university continues to champion ecological restoration and community-driven conservation practices, striving to integrate regenerative futures principles across all its academic, research, and outreach programs. By doing so, DOrSU aims to contribute to the long-term preservation of Davao Oriental's natural resources while promoting inclusive communities, a thriving local economy, and environmental resilience for future generations.

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/dorsu-shares-insights-at-the-first-ever-pamb-summit-2024

5. MinDA, DOrSU Hold Writeshop in Mati City



The Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), in partnership with Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU), held a two-day writeshop in Mati City on October 9-10, 2024, aimed at advancing sustainable mountaineering and ecotourism practices in Mindanao. The event, hosted at Honey's Hotel and Restaurant, gathered over 50 environmental advocates, mountaineers, tourism officials, and community stakeholders to explore the intersection of biodiversity conservation, community empowerment, and responsible tourism.

The writeshop featured a robust lineup of presentations from experts in various fields, beginning with Ms. Marchieza Bicong, Tourism Operations Officer II from the Department of Tourism Regional Office XI, who outlined the Department of Tourism's Accreditation System for Mountain Guides and Porters. Bicong emphasized how this accreditation system ensures professional standards for guides and porters, promoting both safety and environmental stewardship.

In another presentation, Ms. Kristi Donna N. Paredes, Senior TESD Specialist from TESDA XI, and Mr. Neil C. Estudillo, Supervising TESD Specialist, shared insights on Skills Development in Adventure Tourism. They focused on training programs for mountain guides and porters, emphasizing the importance of professional growth to enhance local economic opportunities.

Asst. Prof. Jhonnel P. Villegas, a biologist and educator from DOrSU, followed with an in-depth session on Balancing Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation. Villegas, a recognized expert in wildlife ecology, discussed strategies for maintaining the delicate balance between tourism activities and preserving natural habitats, stressing that ecotourism must serve as a tool for both economic development and environmental protection.

One of the highlights of the event was a presentation by Mr. Mark Aljen D. Binocal, Director of the Center for Futures Thinking and Regenerative Development at DOrSU. Binocal shared Essential Hacks for Effective Social Media Strategies for Mountaineering, emphasizing the role of digital platforms in promoting sustainable tourism and raising awareness about conservation efforts.

In his presentation, DOrSU President Dr. Roy G. Ponce underscored the importance of crafting standardized guidelines for Mindanao mountaineering. “Safety, environmental protection, and ethical tourism practices are critical to achieving harmony between ecotourism and conservation. This writeshop is a crucial step in ensuring that mountaineering supports both community development and the preservation of our natural landscapes,” President Ponce stated.

The event concluded with an interactive workshop where participants collaborated to draft comprehensive guidelines for mountaineering in Mindanao. These guidelines focused on key areas such as safety protocols, environmental preservation, and responsible engagement with local communities. Additionally, the group integrated the advocacy for regenerative futures, aiming to ensure that mountaineering not only sustains but also revitalizes ecosystems, contributing to a more balanced and sustainable future for the region.

The guidelines will be reviewed by key stakeholders and submitted to relevant authorities for implementation across Mindanao’s mountaineering community. Follow-up training sessions and consultations are also planned to ensure that the guidelines are fully adopted and adhered to by mountaineers, local government units, and tourism stakeholders. This event is part of the regenerative futures advocacy efforts of the university, which aim to restore and enhance ecosystems rather than merely maintain them. This advocacy stands as a key pillar in the initiative, helping shape a long-lasting positive impact on Mindanao’s natural resources and communities. (DOrSU PIO)

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/mindanao-mountaineering-core-group-dorsu-hold-writeshop-in-mati-city

6. IBC 2024 Highlights Regenerative Technology for Ecosystem Restoration



The International Biodiversity Conference (IBC) 2024 hosted by Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) was successfully held from October 24 to 26 in the City of Mati, Davao Oriental. This year's conference marked its third installment since its launch in 2019 and attracted a diverse assembly of scientists, academics, community leaders, environmental advocates and students from across the globe.

With the theme "Sustainable Management in Agriculture, Regenerative Technology, and Ecosystem Restoration (SMARTER)," the 3rd IBC featured plenary sessions, paper and policy brief presentations, and extensive networking opportunities.

During the opening ceremony, Dr. Misael B. Clapano, DOrSU's Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Extension, underscored how the conference opens doors for collaboration . "The IBC is a gathering of shared purpose," he said, emphasizing that collective efforts drive effective solutions for biodiversity challenges.

Mati City Mayor Michelle N. Rabat, represented by City Administrator Allan E. Andrada, spoke of Mati's natural treasures, from Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary to its renowned Pujada, Mayo, and Balete Bays. Andrada also shared Mati's new "Highlands to Ocean" (H2O) initiative, underscoring how the SMARTER approach aligns with the city's commitment to environmental stewardship: "This approach speaks to innovation and responsibility—ensuring that today's actions contribute to a sustainable planet for future generations."

Moreover, Provincial Governor Niño Sotero L. Uy, represented by his Chief of Staff Everendo Esver, highlighted the conference's role in uniting global voices for the shared mission of safeguarding biodiversity. "This

gathering allows us to learn from each other and create partnerships that foster resilience and sustainability," Esver said.

In his message, DOrSU President Dr. Roy G. Ponce shared how the IBC has shaped the university's vision of regenerative futures, grounded in the philosophy that human well-being, economic stability, and natural ecosystems can thrive in harmony. "Our commitment is not just to sustain but to strengthen the balance between humanity and nature," he remarked.

A highlight of the opening ceremony was the keynote address by Hanna Kuhfuss, Co-founder and Head of Field Operations at rrreefs, a Zürich-based organization. Kuhfuss presented the successful deployment of a 3D-Printed Eco-Engineered Reef System in Pujada Bay. This groundbreaking project utilizes typhoon-resistant, clay reef structures, designed to revitalize coral habitats and support mangrove rehabilitation. With plans to establish a production facility in Mati, this initiative stands as a model of sustainable marine conservation.

Following the opening ceremony, plenary sessions covered various facets of conservation and sustainability. On the first day, For. Formida P. Andres from DENR-BMB presented on the Philippines' updated biodiversity commitments, and For. Norma Malinyawe of the USAID-INSPIRE Project discussed the importance of partnerships for ecosystem restoration. International perspectives included Dr. Hasnah Darunan from Universitas Andalas in Indonesia, who explored the socio-economic benefits of sustainable agriculture.

The second day's sessions featured Dr. Tan Yen Yi of the National Museum of Singapore who talked on integrating avian research into regenerative practices, followed by Dr. Jayson C. Ibañez from the Philippine Eagle Foundation, who shared insights from the Philippine Eagle Conservation Program. The plenary session also included presentations by Dr. Gina P. Nilo from DA-BSWM on soil and water resource management and Mr. Elden Karl L. Requilme from DA-PRDP on sustainable agriculture initiatives.

The afternoon plenary series continued with Dr. Aileen H. Orbecido from De La Salle University, who discussed "The Bio+Mine Project", a multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitating mines, and Dr. Han Soo Lee from Hiroshima University, who presented the state-of-the-art CHESS Lab, an advanced coastal conservation technology. The day concluded with Atty. Vicente Paolo B. Yu from the United Nations, emphasizing biodiversity's role in sustainable agriculture and development.

In addition to the insightful plenary talks, the conference showcased 88 research papers presented across four thematic clusters: Sustainable Management in Agriculture; Regenerative Technology; Ecosystem Restoration and Biodiversity; and Gender, Policy, and Governance in Sustainable Agriculture and Ecosystem Restoration. Participants included international delegates from Switzerland, Japan, Cuba, Jamaica, Syria, South Korea, Singapore, and Indonesia, alongside representatives from various Philippine academic and research institutions.

To immerse participants in the local culture, a Cultural Night was held, celebrating the heritage of Davao Oriental's Mandaya and Kagan tribes. The conference also included a tour of Mati City's iconic attractions, allowing delegates to experience the city's natural beauty firsthand.

As the 3rd IBC concluded, it reaffirmed its position as a pivotal platform for sharing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and inspiring action. By highlighting innovative solutions through regenerative technology, the conference has ignited a global movement towards ecosystem restoration. The event further underscored DOrSU's commitment to its regenerative futures vision, demonstrating the university's dedication to balancing socio-economic development with environmental stewardship. (DOrSU PIO)

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/ibc-2024-highlights-efforts-in-biodiversity-restoration

7. Clean-Up Drive and Mangrove Planting Concludes DOrSU's 3rd Founding Anniversary



Davao Oriental State University (DOrSU) wrapped up its third founding anniversary celebrations with a Clean-Up Drive and Mangrove Planting event organized by the DOrSU Alumni Association on June 1 at Guang-Guang Mangrove Park and Nursery.

The event underscored the university's dedication to Futures Thinking and Regenerative Development. Professor Emily Antonio, the project leader of the DOrSU Macro- and Micro-plastic Pollution (M2P2) Research Program, delivered a lecture highlighting the critical role of environmental management and conservation. Dr. Antonio called upon the participants to actively participate in preserving nature.

The Honorable Rotchie M. Ravelo, President of the Alumni Association, led the volunteers in a day of action that included cleaning the coastline and planting mangrove saplings.

Mangroves play an essential role in maintaining the health of coastal ecosystems, preventing erosion, supporting biodiversity, and acting as carbon sinks. The volunteers' efforts in planting these saplings contribute to the long-term health and stability of the coastline. Additionally, the clean-up initiative helped remove litter and debris, further protecting the local environment and marine life.

The event commemorated the university's anniversary and reinforced the collective responsibility towards ecological conservation. It stands as evidence of DOrSU's ongoing mission to foster an ethos of sustainability among its community. (DOrSU PIO)

Source:
https://dorsu.edu.ph/clean-up-drive-and-mangrove-planting-concludes-dorsus-3rd-founding-anniversary