

Press Release

January 12, 2016

YANGDIDI

<http://yangdidi.org>

A Multimedia Website Featuring the Untold Stories of Super Typhoon Maysak Survivors

Vancouver, BC/New York, NY -- On March 31, 2015, category 5 Super Typhoon Maysak slammed the remote Ulithi Atoll in the outer islands of Yap, Micronesia with winds reaching well over 250 kilometers per hour, destroying people's homes and most of the communities' infrastructure. After witnessing the devastation left in Maysak's wake, graduate students Sara Cannon¹ from the University of British Columbia and Kelsey Doyle² from New York University teamed up with John Rulmal, Jr., a community leader from Ulithi, to create *Yangdidi*, a multimedia website to document the outer islanders' untold stories.

Cannon and Doyle visited Ulithi in June 2015 while working with [One People One Reef](#)³, a collaboration between Ulithi communities and scientists who are working to bring traditional and scientific methods together in a unique approach to marine resource management. Working closely with Rulmal, they documented the aftermath of Typhoon Maysak via a series of audio, visual, and written interviews with a wide breadth of community members.

"We wanted to find a way to empower my community in Ulithi as we rebuild after super typhoon Maysak," says Rulmal. "We thought it would help to create a platform where people could share their stories and talk about what they went through."

Each person has a harrowing tale to tell. Take Zilla, who currently lives and works in Guam. She talks about seeing pictures of the destruction of her home on the island of Federai from relief efforts only through sporadic Facebook updates, and how difficult it was to continue working while having to wait weeks to hear from her family (Ulithi has no phone or internet). Ignathio, a community leader who was on the paramount chief island of Mogmog for the storm, tells about watching his sister-in-law get picked up by a small tornado. "I thought she was going to die," he says, "but it dropped her again."

To the Ulithian people, *yangdidi* (or "wind force") describes what has happened to their islands. The force of Maysak's winds has drastically shaped the future of this small atoll, and this multimedia website memorializes their experiences in audio, visual, and written forms. With scientists predicting that storm frequencies and intensities will continue to increase due to climate change⁴, Ulithi's story carries grave implications for low-lying island nations in the Pacific. The interviews will be included in a feature-length documentary about the people of Ulithi and the work of [One People One Reef](#), scheduled to premiere in New York on February 6, 2016 and in California (date to be announced).

For more information, please contact Sara Cannon, Tel: 604-789-2433, Email: saracannonbio@gmail.com and/or Kelsey Doyle, Tel: 831-334-1967, Email: kelseycdoyle@gmail.com. Donations and correspondence for Ulithi can be mailed to: Ulithi-Falalop Community Action Program % John Rulmal, Jr., P.O. Box 3050, Falalop Ulithi, Yap FM 96943.

Press Release
Subsequent Information

January 12, 2016

1. Sara Cannon is a graduate of the Marine Biology program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is a TerreWEB scholar at the University of British Columbia, where she is currently pursuing her Masters of Science in Geography. For more information about Sara, please visit her website at <http://www.saraecannon.com>.
2. Kelsey Doyle holds a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Digital Media with a Concentration in Production from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is currently a Masters of Arts candidate in News and Documentary Journalism at New York University. To learn more about Kelsey, please visit her website at <http://www.kelseydoyle.com>.
3. To learn more about One People One Reef's work, please visit <http://onepeopleonereef.ucsc.edu>.
4. In 2015, there were 18 typhoons, eight of which reached "super typhoon" status (category 4 or above) in the Pacific. 2015 set a new annual record for category 4 and 5 hurricanes and typhoons (the previous record was in 2004): <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=87092>