



Navigating Light, Holding Rain

Our proposal “Navigating Light, Holding Rain” creates a cultural monument that celebrates tradition and deep knowledge of sailing and navigation that empowered Indigenous Fijians to traverse and trade across the Pacific Ocean from their island homes. Inspired by the ceremonial ritual of Yaqona (Kava), where chiefs welcome guests by offering a communal drink, the design metaphorically extends this gesture of hospitality to visitors, climate, and landscape.

At the heart of the project is a modular solar structure, an ellipsoidal “sail on a mast” made of Monocrystalline Silicon photovoltaic panels. These modular “sails” form a constellation across the site, serving as both renewable energy sources and sculptural landmarks. Each unit collects sunlight and rainwater, and its mast structure discreetly channels rain into the integrated gutter system, delivering water to a network of terraced retention ponds below. The geometry of the sail references traditional canoe rigs and contemporary minimalism, preserving the cultural integrity while allowing local fabrication and ease of maintenance.

We propose to rehabilitate the existing dam and reservoir above Marou Village for the twin purpose of a pumped-storage hydroelectric plant and as a retention basin to store water during the rainy season for use during the dry season. A new set of retention ponds, gently terraced along the valley site, will serve as both ecological infrastructure and community space. These ponds will collect runoff, support native planting, and regulate seasonal water cycles, addressing both drought and flood resilience.

The project’s material palette centers on durable, locally viable solutions: geotextile-lined ponds, galvanized steel structures, and native plantings. PV sail modules can be deployed at varying scales for household, civic, or communal use. This flexibility supports phased implementation and potential community co-ownership.

The visitor and community experience unfolds as a journey through water and light. The serpentine pathway leads users through the landscape, with each pond and sail acting as a

place of reflection, play, conversation, or ceremony. At night, integrated LED elements subtly illuminate the sail edges and poles, revealing the cut lines inspired by celestial navigation and island silhouettes.

Most importantly, this project creates an identity anchor for Marou Village. While the community is deeply connected to its traditions and generous in its openness, it currently lacks a spatial monument that articulates its cultural narrative. Our design addresses this by embedding sustainable energy infrastructure within a landscape of ritual, education, and celebration. By uniting clean power, water resilience, and cultural storytelling, the installation not only supports the village’s practical needs but elevates the everyday into something extraordinary—welcoming all who arrive by land or sea. The system becomes a cultural landmark, visible across the terrain, honoring the past while signaling a regenerative future.