



## Sihek Recovery Plan Finalized

by Gregory A. Koob, PIA State Biologist

There has been a draft recovery plan for the Micronesian Kingfisher or sihek (*Halcyon cinnamomina cinnamomina*), since March of 2004 but on October 3, 2008, the US Fish and Wildlife Service released the final version.

Since the mid 1960s, nine of the 11 species of native forest-dwelling birds from Guam have gone extinct, mostly due to the brown tree snake (*Boiga irregularis*). The sihek is one of the few remaining bird species from Guam. It was originally listed as endangered in 1984. By 1988 it was no longer in the wild and is now found only in captivity. Captive breeding efforts to save the species began in 1983 with the start of the Guam Bird Rescue Projects. During the first two years of the project, 29 sihek were moved from Guam to several Mainland zoos and by 1990 the captive population was up to 61 birds. Currently, it is represented only by a captive population of 94 individuals in 16 zoological institutions in the continental United States and 6 individuals at the Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources facility in Mangilao, Guam.

The first captive-reared sihek were returned to Guam in 2003. More birds were returned in 2004 and 2008 bringing the total captive population on Guam to 10 individuals. The program has been hindered by high mortality rates and poor reproduction so progress has been slow.

The revised recovery plan focuses on actions that will coordinate and monitor recovery efforts, restore populations, control predators, protect and manage habitat, and increase public awareness to ensure long-term survival of the bird species. NRCS can help with these efforts working with our clients using Farm Bill programs to protect and restore sihek habitat.

The purpose of the recovery plan is to outline criteria to downlist the species from endangered to threatened status and to identify prioritized actions



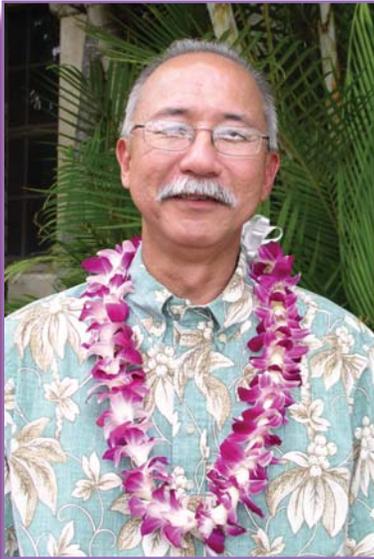
Source: Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources.

to recover the species and remove it from federal protection. Criteria for downlisting the species are to establish two populations of at least 500 birds each (one in northern Guam and one in southern Guam); ensure both subpopulations are either stable or increasing for a period of at least five consecutive years, ensure sufficient habitat is protected and managed, and control brown tree snakes and other introduced predators. The criteria for removing the species from federal protection (delisting) are the same as above except the numbers for each subpopulation are increased to 1,000 individuals each and the timeframes are extended to 10 years. A monitoring plan will need to be done for five years after that.

Historically the sihek occurred throughout Guam in all habitats except pure savannah and wetlands. As late as 1945 it was considered a fairly common forest bird. In addition to the brown tree snake, habitat loss or degradation, pesticides, competition with introduced black drongo, disease and introduced predators such as cats, rats, and monitor lizards have all contributed to its decline.

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*Current Developments* is a newsletter for employees and partners. You may submit articles and photos to:

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## Message from the PIA Director

I think that it will be a long time before I forget the year of 2008. I remember clearly the very difficult times created when the new Farm Bill took so long to get through the U.S. Congress. The uncertainty and resulting funding restrictions made life very hard for many of us. But we worked very hard to get through it and now have a new Farm Bill.

Then our first stand alone financial audit uncovered many problems that needed to be corrected quickly. So we worked very hard right through the Christmas holiday season and corrected the problems. While we have not completely finished that work, we have made tremendous progress and look to make major changes to permanently correct those problems.

And now we have to implement the new Farm Bill programs. Soon the new manuals will be out and despite the challenges that always comes with new programs, I know we will deliver these programs to our clients and the community.

I know this because our agency has shown time and time again that when we are challenged by adversity, we deliver. And we deliver because YOU are true professionals and YOU work very hard to help our clients. If there is a common theme that runs through all of our offices, it is that YOU work very hard to help our clients. Never let us forget that by doing this, we are working very hard to help our islands. Conservation is our purpose. Conservation is our passion.

As we move forward in Fiscal Year 2009, remember that our priorities must be:

### Priority #1 – Delivery of Farm Bill Programs

- Outreach to New and Previously Underserved Clients
- Conservation Planning to Enhance Farm Bill Program Delivery
- Developing Quality Contracts
- Contract Implementation and Completion

### Priority #2 – Performance Goals

- Timely Progress Reporting
- Accurate Data

Please remember that the Farm Bill contracts we help to develop are promises made to both our clients and the federal government. We need to follow up with our clients to help them implement the conservation practices that are planned in the contracts. Let's continue to focus on our task of "Helping People Help the Land."

  
Lawrence T. Yamamoto, Director



## PIA's Earth Team Volunteer Program

Here once again as we are approaching a new year, we at the NRCS are proud of the many dedicated volunteers and employees who committed their time and talents to conserving and protecting soil, water and wildlife in our community as well as everyone in it. We thank each and every Earth Team Volunteer in the Pacific Islands Area for a job well done.

As we venture into a New Year, I ask each employee to continue recruiting volunteers and sharing our skills and talents with new volunteers that comes through our doors. As our mission is important in our daily task, let's all continue to help each other to meet our goals and do the best we can to accomplish that mission. Once again, THANK YOU for your hard work and dedication to the Earth Team Volunteer Program and ask for your continued support. --Anton Tornito, ET Coordinator in the West Area Office

### HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

Additional information on NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Program is available online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> or you may contact

Jolene Lau: Pacific Islands Area – Honolulu and other HI Islands  
Antonette Tornito: Pacific Islands – West Area, Saipan, FSM & Palau

*Happy New Year!*



#### *Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Shares His Priorities:*

- \*Enhance health and nutrition
- \*Advance research and support renewable energy
- \*Make progress on environmental challenges
- \*Support all of agriculture including organic
- \* Implement the 2008 Farm Bill
- \*Protect clean air, clean water, and wildlife habitat

USDA's 30th Secretary of Agriculture also intends to move quickly on the major challenges facing the Department - modernizing USDA's computer systems and finally closing the sad chapter of the Department's struggle with civil rights.

*"We need to do a better job of responding to challenges and emphasize a transparent and inclusive style of governing," stated Secretary Tom Vilsack.*

*--Excerpts from USDA News Release*



# Employee Spotlight

## Grow Low Campaign

by Gibson H. Santos, Soil Conservationist,  
FSM Field Office



*Mike Whitt, Resource Conservationist*

Three years in Hawaii... I can't believe it's been that long already. If you would have asked me four years ago if I would ever live here, I would have answered with a definite "No". And to be honest, when I was offered the soil conservationist position in the Aiea Field Office, I almost didn't accept. But as soon as I met some of my new coworkers I knew it would be alright. Even though I believe they got a little too much enjoyment out of watching me learn the local lingo and try the new foods (I'm never eating raw fish again).

I try to enjoy much of what Hawaii has to offer. I have spent many hours hiking, surfing (well, I try), biking, working, karaoke (I can make dogs holler a mile away), and just soaking up the climate. I like just about anything that gets me outside, which is one reason Hawaii is so great; endless outdoor activities. I have also benefited from working with many of the local farmers and learning about a whole new world of agriculture. The amount of labor and resources that goes into producing an acre of herbs, taro, papaya, ti, banana, and others is amazing.

I still like to go back to Ohio and visit my family and friends; and of course, get in a little hunting. This past trip I was fortunate enough to take a nice buck, a red fox, and a mess of squirrels. As a result, many in the State Office were fortunate enough to try some of my world famous venison and squirrel jerky! Well, maybe not world famous, but it was edible. I just hope I have as much luck next year...

The loss of undisturbed native forest is a conservation reality in Pohnpei. This is in large part due to the planting of sakau (*Piper methysticum*) in the upland forest. Sakau, also known as kava, has both traditional and economic value. Wide spread conversion of native forest to sakau plantations has been well documented by The Nature Conservancy. From 1975 to 1995, undisturbed natural forest dropped from 42% to 15%.

Over the years, NRCS has worked with our partners to help encourage the planting of sakau in the island lowlands. During a severe drought in 1997, NRCS assisted in the establishment of approximately 200 lowland sakau nurseries around the island. Sakau cuttings were rooted in plastic bags then transplanted when normal rainfall returned. The bag nurseries have gained wide acceptance and this technique is still used by many of our customers.

Unfortunately, farmers continue to move into the uplands because sakau grown there can be harvested in two years, although the quality is not as high as that grown in the lowlands. There is no economic incentive to stop this practice.

The Grow Low Campaign still promotes lowland sakau cultivation, but the methods have changed. The Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) is now in the forefront, with NRCS providing technical assistance. One of the approaches developed and implemented this year to tackle the upland deforestation issue was adding an alternative income generation activity to help offset the pressure. Based on information gathered through the forest monitoring work, 20 active upland sakau farmers were given the incentive to grow vegetables as an alternate income generating activity during the three to five year growing period of the lowland sakau plants.

In early 2008, a train-the-trainer workshop was taught by NRCS to CSP's Terrestrial Staff on basic principles of raised bed gardening. The primary objective is to utilize available material resources onsite to ensure cost effectiveness, practicality and adaptability for the farmer. The workshop also demonstrated application of conservation practices utilizing composted animal waste, onsite mulch and minimal tillage. Using their new training, CSP staff then began to work with the selected farmers, holding their own workshops on vegetable gardening. CSP will continue to work with these farmers closely for a year. NRCS continues to provide support to CSP as needed to ensure success of the Grow Low Campaign.

# Celebrating GIS Day

Every year in November the GIS community celebrates GIS day around the globe ([www.gisday.com](http://www.gisday.com)). The official day was November 19, 2008. On the Big Island of Hawaii there were two celebrations. One of the events was on Friday, November 14, 2008 in Kailua-Kona and another on Wednesday, November 19, 2008 at Volcano's National Park. NRCS was asked to participate on the event on Friday, November 14, 2008.

The event was held at the old pavilion at the County of Hawaii old airport park. The event centered on a Geocaching hunt to provide students interaction with the GIS Community as well as incorporating GPS, anthropology, science, geology and career opportunity in this new technology.

There were two sessions, one starting at 9am and the other one starting at 12:30. There were five schools represented at the event with a total of approximately 300 students. The main sponsor was the County of Hawaii, and there were ten other supporting agencies and community organizations.

We had four volunteers from NRCS/Kona SWCD help in participating in the event. The volunteers were Mike Kolman (Soil Scientist-Kona), Patra Vidondo (Soil Conservationist-Kona), Mary Robblee (Conservation Assistant-Kona SWCD) and Reese Libby (Geographer-Waimea). We had a lot of fun teaching the students and the teachers the importance of GIS/GPS and how it affects us in our daily lives while working at our jobs and spreading the NRCS mission of natural resource conservation. ESRI is also a sponsor to this event and the Hawaii State Department of Education is real close to a licensing contract agreement with them for the whole school system in the state. Hopefully by next year most of the students will be working with ArcGIS 9, ArcExplorer and GPS units as a tool in their classrooms. Many of the teachers are science teachers and can see the applications of GIS in the students' science projects. This is an important tool that they will need for their future.

Today, GIS is a multibillion-dollar industry employing hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. GIS is taught in schools, colleges, and universities throughout the world. Professionals in every field are increasingly aware of the advantages of thinking and working geographically.

*--Reese Libby, Waimea Geographer*



*Mike Kolman (top), Reese Libby (middle), and Patra Vidondo (bottom) at GIS Day.*

## Personnel Update

**Incoming:** Kara Nelson, Soil Conservationist, Kealahou; Andrea Thompson, STEP, Kahului; John Womack, District Conservationist, American Samoa; and Sheryl Woo, Human Resource Officer, State Office.

**Outgoing:** Brie Darr, Fish and Wildlife Service, NM; Diane Funke, Dept. of Air Force, TX; Chris Jasper, resigned from Kealahou; Carol Kawachi, retired from Kealahou; and Eileen Winkle, transfer to Oregon State Office.

**Rating Panel Helpers:** Pam Aguon, Jocelyn Bamba, Dan Bloedel, Phil Cherry, Scott Crockett, David Duvaouchelle, Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Bob Gavenda, Keith Harada, Mike Hayama, Kori Hisashima, Bill Hollingsworth, Gail Ichikawa, Tony Ingersoll, Wally Jennings, Chad Kacir, Dennis Kimberlin, Kevin Kinvig, Jeff Knowles, Greg Koob, Jolene Lau, Bart Lawrence, Denise Light, Lori Metz, Karl Mikasa, Hud Minshew, Shirley Nakamura, Mike Robotham, Tony Rolfes, Cynthia Shishido, Colleen Simpson, Craig Smith, Cherry Sriben, Drew Stout, Harry Toki, Patra Vidondo, Jeff Wheaton, Mike Whitt, and Shirley Yamaguchi.

**Spot Awards:** Lehua Angay, Robert Gavenda, Kori Hisashima, Morgan Puaa, Lex Riggle, Colleen Simpson, Craig Smith, and Antonette Tornito.

**Extra Effort:** Pamela Aguon, Jay Doronila, Gregory Koob, Kurenio Ngowaki, Martin Naputi, Cynthia Shishido, Craig Smith, and Harry Toki.

**Years of Service:** Darlene Cho (20), Dudley Kubo (25), and Nathan Varns (30).

## Seabury soil team takes second in state contest



## Outreach



*Bobette Parsons and Megan O'Brian from the Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District presented the EnviroScpae watershed model for the Seaside Science event at Waialae Elementary. More than 125 students and their parents participated in the event and they loved learning about soil erosion control and various conservation practices. Thank you Ladies!*

*Pictured to the left is Jay Nobriga of the West Maui Soil & Water Conservation District with the Maui Land Judging Contest winners from the Seabury Hall 4-H Dirt Devils (Taylor Hori, Haley Murayama, Tyler Yamada, and Ashley Malek). The Maui team finished 20 points behind Kauai High School in the state contest that was held on October 21, 2008. Congratulations to the winners and the teams from Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island.*

*--Excerpts from Maui News, Nov. 26, 2008.*

# Big Island RC&D Corner

## Testing the Waters

Big Island RC&D Partners with Hilo Bay Watershed Advisory Group (HBWAG)

The Big Island RC&D Council, County of Hawaii Planning Department, and HBWAG all came together to initiate water quality testing in the Hilo Bay Watershed using grant funds provided by Hawaii State Coastal Zone Management Program. This joint partnership also included the University of Hawaii and the Hamakua Soil & Water Conservation District.

The study was directed toward, identifying and defining the real water quality problems in the contributing streams, springs, seeps and estuarine areas that all ultimately connect to the bay. Many of these streams and tributaries were designated as “impaired” in the past, based only on “visual assessments” and limited monitoring data.



*Picturesque Hilo Bay is a highly used recreational area that is fed by springs, seeps, rivers and streams, but an accurate picture of watershed dynamics, impacts, and conditions is much less clear than this photograph. The HBWAG/Big Island RC&D Council partnership is seeking answers to the many questions that surround the bay and it's huge watershed area.*

In order to develop a science based and realistic watershed management plan in the future, the HBWAG agreed that monitoring data needed to be collected and analyzed to clearly define and later source any water quality impairments and problems. The HBWAG felt that until perceived problems were clearly inventoried, monitored, identified and eventually sourced, that the pursuit of implementation strategies would seem to be inefficient, costly and unlikely to result in any water quality improvements.

After data from this recently completed study is analyzed the next steps for the HBWAG will be to seek out additional monitoring tools and techniques that could lead to pinpointing the sources of contamination and possible implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). This effort by the HBWAG and partners speaks directly to NRCS 9 steps of conservation planning: “1). Define the problem.”

*--Article and photos by Stephen R. Skipper,  
Big Island RC&D Coordinator*



*Tom Young (front), HBWAG Steering Committee member and Hamakua SWCD Director and Steve Godszak, HBWAG Co-Chair prepare to take samples at the upper reaches of the Wailoa estuary and the end of the Waikaea Stream Channel.*

## Youth to Youth Environmental Education Program

by Gibson H. Santos, Soil Conservationist  
FSM Field Office



NRCS spreads the conservation message again in 2008!

Borrowing from the very successful *Youth-to-Youth* public education and awareness program in the Marshall Islands, The Nature Conservancy and the Conservation Society of Pohnpei have tailored the approach to improve environmental awareness and education in Pohnpei, FSM. The NRCS Field Office in Pohnpei has been an active partner by providing assistance with the terrestrial portion of the program.

The goal of the environmental awareness program is to extend promising environmental initiatives to the communities of Pohnpei, and encourage teachers and students to get involved in addressing environmental issues of Pohnpei. The program also builds students confidence to influence their peers so that they may become active contributors in developing a sustainable future for the island.

The Conservation Society of Pohnpei piloted the *Pwulopwul ong me Pwulopwul* (Youth to Youth) Environmental Program in eight target schools. NRCS and SPC DSAP was assigned to the elementary school in Salapwuk Village, one of the few villages still without electricity or reliable transportation. Our role was to work with the students to establish and implement an environmental education project on which to focus their efforts for the entire school year.

NRCS, with assistance from DSAP-SPC, partnered with Salapwuk Elementary School and carried out a project on

## Congratulations Elskin!



*It is an honor to announce, Elskin Allan, PE, Civil Engineer successfully passed the National Council of Examiners Engineering, PE Civil Engineering Exam.*

*We applaud Elskin's perseverance, dedication and sound technical assistance she provides the Maui Field Office and the customers we serve.*

*Ranae Ganske-Cerizo (right) celebrated Elskin's (left) career achievement during the Maui Field Office Business Plan meeting on October 28, 2008.*



Traditional Agro-forestry and Sustainable Gardening for food security and income generation. Students learned about planting and caring for plants - both traditional and non-traditional, as well as soil properties, soil erosion, ridge to reef conservation principles, and the hydrologic process. The above photo shows a hands-on workshop on soil testing for pH, N, P and K. All workshops were taught in Pohnpeian by NRCS staff and DSAP SPC staff, as English is a secondary language.

NRCS staff and DSAP SPC staff visited the village at least monthly over the school year, providing a consistent message and reinforcing the information taught in previous sessions. Word of mouth is the primary awareness tool for island communities, and the Youth to Youth Program is proving to be very successful by getting the youth of Pohnpei talking about their island and its resources.

## More Critical Habitat for Hawaii

Article by Gregory A. Koob, PIA State Biologist

On December 4, 2008, the US Fish and Wildlife Service finalized the rule designating 12 federally protected species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies. The designation includes 8,788 acres in 32 units on Oahu, Hawaii, Maui, Molokai and Kauai.

The 12 species are: *Drosophila aglaia*, *D. hemipeza*, *D. montgomeryi*, *D. obatai*, *D. substenoptera*, and *D. tarphytrichia* on Oahu; *D. heteroneura*, *D. ochrobasis* and *D. mulli* on Hawaii; *D. muscaphulia* (on Kauai); *D. neoclavisetae* on Maui; and *D. differens* on Molokai.

Some of you may recall that the USFWS initially proposed one-acre units for each of these species. After public comments, USFWS came out with a more biologically defensible proposal which was finalized in this designation. This final rule excludes 450 acres of land owned by Maui Land and Pineapple Company that was proposed in the second go-around for *Drosophila neoclavisetae*. Those acres are within the Puu Kukui Watershed Preserve and were excluded on the basis that the Maui Land and Pineapple Company is already managing the land in a way that will benefit the species.

Approximately 50 percent of the designated critical habitat is on federal lands that includes 3,604 acres in the Kona Forest Unit of Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge and 752 acres in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. State lands comprise 27 percent, or 2,331 acres while 1 percent (128 acres) is on City and County of Honolulu land. Twenty-two percent, or 1,974 acres are privately owned.

Critical habitat designation requires that federal agencies, such as NRCS, consult with the USFWS if any action they are permitting or funding may modify the habitat. The GIS shape files for this newly designated critical habitat is available in each affected offices' geodatabase under "endangered\_habitat."

*Drosophila substenoptera* by Ken Kaneshiro, UH



There are approximately 106 identified species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies. Each species is specially adapted to a particular island and a specific habitat type, ranging from desert-like environments to rain forests and swamplands.

Hawaiian picture-wing flies have been called the "birds of paradise" of the insect world because of their spectacular displays during courtship and defense of their territories. The picture-wings are known for their elaborate markings on otherwise clear wings.

The major threats to the 12 species covered by this critical habitat rule are habitat degradation by feral animals (mostly pigs), loss of host plants, and impacts of nonnative insect predators and parasites, including ants and wasps. These species of picture-wing flies are reduced to just a few populations within localized patches of their host plants, some of which are also listed under the Endangered Species Act.



*Drosophila mulli* by Ken Kaneshiro, UH

## USFWS Proposes 48 Kauai Species for Listing as Endangered



One of the plants being proposed as endangered is the painiua, *Astelia waialealae*, known only from the Alakai Swamp area of Kauai. There are only 27 individual plants remaining in the wild.



Article and photo by Gregory A. Koob, PIA State Biologist

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to add 48 species found only on the island of Kauai to the federal endangered species list. The proposed listing was published in the *Federal Register* on October 21, 2008.

The proposal is the first time the USFWS has applied a newly developed, ecosystem-based approach to species conservation. It addresses common threats that occur across the ecosystems so conservation efforts can be focused on restoring habitat functions. Conservation of whole ecosystems benefits not only the endangered species but “common” and unlisted species as well.

Two birds, the akikiki and akekee are included in this proposed rule. There were estimated to be fewer than 1,400 akikiki and fewer than 3,500 akekee in 2007. The populations of both birds dropped drastically since 2000. One species of Hawaiian picture-wing fly and 45 plants are also included in the proposal.

Along with proposing to list the plants and animals as endangered the USFWS is also proposing to designate 27,674 acres of critical habitat for 47 of the species (they are not proposing critical habitat for one plant, a palm). Much of this proposed critical habitat overlaps already-designated critical habitat on Kauai.

Pat Shade, PIA GIS Specialist, has placed the shape file for the proposed critical habitat on the Kauai and State office servers’ geodatabases. Comments on the proposal were due December 22, 2008. The USFWS has one year to make the proposal final.

## Congratulations Ranae!

*The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation’s 61st Annual Convention was held on Oahu on October 16-17, 2008. Warren Watanabe, HFBF’s Executive Director presented an award to Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Maui District Conservationist, for her dedication, commitment, and outreach as the “Hawaii Farm Bureau 2008 Outstanding Friend of the Farmer.”*

*On September 13, 2008, Ranae also was awarded, “Associate Member of the Year” by the Maui County Farm Bureau for her outstanding service rendered to the community.*

# Piggery Waste Project

by Gibson H. Santos and Rodasio Samuel, FSM Field Office

Island culture drives how local people use the land and sea resources. Raising pigs is an integral component of Pohnpei's tradition. To be a Pohnpeian, one must have pigs, Sakau (Piper methysticum), and yam. These prestigious necessities are offered to the high chiefs as a tribute once a year and are also used in other social gatherings throughout the year. Households are obligated to participate in these cultural activities hence requiring them to build piggeries. Frequently manure is thought of only as a waste product and is washed directly into streams and shoreline areas for disposal. NRCS conservation practices often require adaptation to fit the tropical climate, small farming systems, the socio-economic and cultural realities of our cooperators - that is, to change people's behavior and get conservation on the ground. For example, limited agricultural use of animal manure occurs due to reluctance to handle animal wastes. Knowledge about how to use manure and its fertilizer value is lacking.

NRCS field office staff have been working with Nahnpei Memorial High School for several years to incorporate the waste management component of their small piggery operation to demonstrate a sustainable and environmentally friendly system. The wash water is channeled to a gutter within banana plantings while solids are composted and incorporated into the vegetable farm. The roof of the piggery is extended to keep materials dry from rainfall and to aid in composting. The roof extension also prevents additional rain water from overflowing the collection ditch.

The photo below shows NRCS staff explaining to the students how the system works as well as the benefits of integrating manure into traditional and modified agroforestry systems. NRCS conservation practices complement the sustained continuation of the island people's unique way of life while protecting the island's important and limited natural resources.



# Civil Rights

Happy New Year Pacific Islands Area Folks, I would like to start off with thanking everyone that put in an application to become Special Emphasis Program Managers for the Pacific Islands. It was a pleasant surprise to see how many of you were interested in "making a difference" through the Civil Rights Advisory Committee. In addition I would like for all of you to join me in congratulating the new members.

*Jolene Lau*, Black Emphasis  
*Leo Smock-Randall*, American Indian  
*Karl Mikasa*, Disability Emphasis

The Pacific Islands Area Civil Rights Advisory Committee is committed to serving you as employees of the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service USDA-NRCS. So take a minute and check out our web page at <http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/about/civilrights.html> You will find links to the individual programs on both the local and national level. Everything from scholarship information, or how to become a member, can be found.

As this is your committee, we are always looking for ideas, suggestions or participation. Please do not hesitate to contact either Kurenzio Ngowakl or any of the program managers with your views and opinions. We are looking forward to the interaction, creativity and energy our Committee can create this year.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Morton  
Asian American Pacific Islander  
Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area

## Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations to Maggie Kramp, Martin Naputi, and Gregory Koob for being this round of winners!

The winner for the Conservation category is *Maggie Kramp*, SWCD Secretary in Kahului. Her picture is fern coming through ground cover. The winner for the Scenic category is *Martin Naputi*, Soil Conservation Technician in Saipan. His picture is of the Bird Island. The winner for the Cultural category is *Gregory Koob*, State Biologist in Honolulu. His picture is of the Japanese fishing ship, “*Kaiyo Maru No. 25.*”

To view all the photos that were submitted for the contest, see [www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/features/photo\\_contest\\_photogallery.asp](http://www.pia.nrcs.usda.gov/features/photo_contest_photogallery.asp). Thank you to everyone who contributed photos, to the judges, and to *Karl Mikasa* for creating the searchable database of images.

Submit one JPEG or TIFF image to [Jolene.Lau@hi.usda.gov](mailto:Jolene.Lau@hi.usda.gov) in the following three categories: Conservation (wildlife, resource concern, or implementation of a practice), Cultural, or Scenic. The leadership team will make their selections based on appropriateness to the category, composition, creativity, and aesthetics. Award recipients will receive an NRCS logo item and we'll post the winning photos in the next newsletter. The deadline to submit photos for the next issue of *Current Developments* is due on May 1, 2009.

*Photo Contest Winners: Maggie Kramp (top), Martin Naputi (middle), and Gregory Koob (bottom).*



February is  
African American  
Heritage Month