

Current Developments

Ribbon Cutting at Nimitz Hill

On June, 28, 2004, Typhoon Tingting passed just north of Guam, tracking on a north westerly path towards Asia. Although Typhoon Tingting did not make a direct hit on the island of Guam, the storm dumped heavy rainfall on Guam and the Northern Marianas. About 20 inches of precipitation fell on Guam causing major landslides, flooding problems and severe damage to some communities and homes. One such incident took place at Nimitz Hill. A slumping hillside gave way to the tremendous energy caused by the heavy down-pour creating a major landslide. This resulted in the condemning of one home and a hazardous situation for the immediate surrounding area. The Governor of Guam and the mayor of Piti were left groping for answers to mitigate the problem while the little community anxiously waited for a reprieve out of this dire situation. Where would the help come from to undertake corrective measures in addressing this emergency situation at Nimitz Hill, given that there is no local mediation money available for this type of a natural disaster?



Hillside View

Enter the USDA-NRCS engineering team of Jeffrey Wheaton, PE, State Conservation Engineer, his capable team (Brent Schumacher, Engineer; Al Pecson, PE, Engineer Technician), the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, approximately 60,000 tons of fill moved. Fast forward to January 30, 2008, and the resource concern at Nimitz Hill has been successfully mitigated. The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on the morning of Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at the restored foothills of what used to be a landslide-threatened residential area at Nimitz Hill, Guam, bringing this EWP project to a completion. Larry Yamamoto, Director of Pacific Islands Area (PIA), Bart Lawrence, Assist. Dir. Ops. PIA-West and Jeffrey Wheaton were all present at this event. The Honorable Felix Camacho, Governor of Guam, arrived shortly after 10:00 am as an appreciative keynote speaker to an audience of local partners and a small crowd of witnesses. This is a success story of safeguarding lives and property by means of the EWP Program!



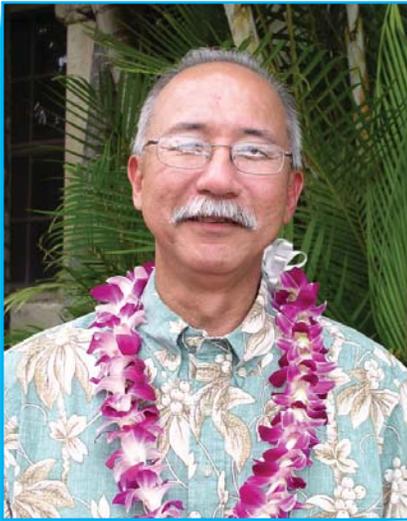
Larry Yamamoto, John Bart Lawrence, and Felix Camacho, Governor of Guam.

“The completion of the project represents the combined efforts of the Government of Guam agencies (DPW, Civil Defense, SWCD, Guam EPA and others) and USDA NRCS. Many individuals throughout this partnership of local and Federal agencies and the landowners themselves, contributed to removal of the imminent threat to life and property that was the massive pile of weakened soil that threatened more homes below the landslide and potentially homes above the slip. Nimitz Hill Estates Landslide Stabilization is an outstanding example of local and Federal agencies working together, bringing technical and financial resources to resolve a natural resource problem.” (Wheaton, J., 1.29.2008)

--by Kurencio B. Ngowakl

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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

Every once in a while it hits me how quickly things change around me. I used to hope that it just seems that way because I am getting older, but actually I think we all know that our world is rapidly changing. And the only thing we can really count on is that things will continue to change.

The recent retirement of James Lum; the transfers of Paul Scales, Gwen Gilbert and Camille Kimbrough; the many new hires we have made add faces to these changes. But there are many changes that have a great impact on our professional lives. One such change will come with the new Farm Bill.

Rather than be dismayed by this change, we should understand that this new Farm Bill will give us a great opportunity. I believe we can make it easier on ourselves by learning from the previous Farm Bills. We need to take from our experiences with the prior Farm Bills and use it to shape the new program so we can develop solutions that are easy to implement and still meet our diverse natural resource needs.

I want to compliment all the employees of the Pacific Islands Area for their hard work and willingness to work together in the past. You have shown your desire to help our clients really make a commitment to conservation. We need all of you to continue that same effort as we move toward the future. Please continue to be the creative professionals that you are so that we can provide the services we are charged to deliver. I know if we work together we can continue "Helping People Help the Islands."



Lawrence T. Yamamoto, Director

In Celebration of National Volunteer Week in April, we proudly thank the 64 valuable individuals that volunteered a total of 1536 hours! Together we are making a difference in the Pacific Islands Area.

Earth Team Volunteers in the Marianas

Ms. Marites Castillo, president of the volunteer group, known as Friends of the Mariana Islands (FMI), and Angelo Villagomez, are pictured in front of the Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council's (MRC&DC) office on Beach Road on the island of Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), showing off their Earth Team Volunteer award and certificates. FMI president, Ms. Marites Castillo, received two awards: one for herself, and the other one for her FMI group's activities. Angelo's genius is as a grassroots organizer; while, Ms. Castillo's group, FMI, provided the backbone for the Earth Team Volunteer activities with over 3000 volunteer hours and counting for 2008.



Angelo Villagomez and Marites Castillo

Angelo Villagomez, Earth Team Volunteer, and former MRC&DC NFWF Coral Reef Public Awareness in Saipan Coordinator (PIC), is also a Cofounder of Beautify CNMI!, the local group of people interested in making the CNMI a better place to live by bringing the community together to volunteer for beach cleanups, tree plantings, recycling, and whatever it takes to improve the quality of life. It all started in April 2006, when by serendipity, Ken Kramer, Marianas RC&D Coordinator, asked Mr. Villagomez, the new NFWF Coral Reef PIC, to come along to a meeting of the newly forming group, known as, "Beautify CNMI!," saying: "Why don't you come along? This group might help us plant some trees." MRC&DC became: "Volunteer Central," where groups could call MRC&DC; and then come in to pick up trash bags, gloves, and even water to do ETV work. Two years, thousands of trees planted, tons of garbage removed from the beaches and roads, later; and the island has changed for the better. Ron Kramis, when he was here, spoke of a new, better Saipan, which was clean; and with beaches that actually looked nice without all the trash. He spoke of a feeling he had that Saipan had become, in the span of only two years: "The new and improved Saipan," a destination, he could recommend to his friends.

MRC&DC supported Beautify CNMI, as it encompassed everything that RC&D was goaled for in terms of community development and environmental stewardship.

Angelo's blog <http://beautifycnmi.blogspot.com/> reads:

It is a coalition of various government agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, private citizens and visitors. Its mission is to foster community pride through a beautification campaign aimed at enhancing the beauty of the island environments and quality of life through public education on recycling, restoration, waste management, and enforcement of laws.

Ms. Marites Castillo and the FMI group performed miracles by volunteering to cleanup the roads and beaches of Saipan. Their goal is to maintain the environment for the benefit of everyone in the CNMI. According to Ms. Marites, the FMI group began its amazingly consistent cleanup of roads and beaches in April 2006. Since then, they have cleaned up Lau Lau Beach every third week of the month, which now amounts to 20 consecutive months. Astoundingly, and concurrently, on every 2nd Sunday of the month, they were also cleaning up Isa Road (Isa = "rainbow" in the Chamorro local language) from the Saipan Botanical Gardens to the stoplight intersection that leads to the Northern Marianas College. When I asked her, "How can your group possibly do this much work?" She replied, "FMI ETVs get a great feeling of pride for the work they do for their environment." She added, "Thanks to Angelo, and Mr. Ken for their motivation and assistance in helping them to keep Saipan beautiful. I hope that people will know, appreciate, and remember that it was the hard work of FMI Earth Team Volunteers that helps to make Saipan a better place to live!" See her FMI blog for more details on her groups activities: <http://islasmarianas.blogspot.com/>

The Earth Team can thank Angelo, Ms. Marites Castillo, the FMI, and Beautify CNMI! for improving the environment, and for positively changing people's perspective of Saipan, concerning their island home.

--by Ken Kramer

Employee Spotlight



*Jeff Knowles
District Conservationist
Kealahou, Hawaii*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) held a Service Recognition Ceremony on May 1, 2008, at USDA headquarters to honor Jeff's exceptional contribution to the U.S. mission. Jeff spent six months in Afghanistan to assist with agricultural assessments and project proposals.

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service brought together viewpoints from the field and headquarters to develop and explore recommendations for future recruitment, retention, training, civilian-military cooperation, and post-deployment support.

The USDA recognition ceremony was held in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Affairs Day. Foreign Affairs Day is the annual homecoming for State Department retirees and includes a keynote address, seminars, and the American Foreign Service Association's (AFSA) Memorial Plaque Ceremony to honor employees killed in the line of duty (Tom Stefani of USDA).

When asked about his duty in Afghanistan, Jeff said, *"It is not often in one's life when you're presented with an opportunity to help in the rebuilding of a country. There is no question that this has been the most rewarding experience in my 30 years of government service."*

Combined NRCS Design Effort on Moloka'i



*District Conservationist Harry Toki (left)
with Civil Engineer Sherman White (right)
who completed five designs.*



*Civil Engineer Elskin Allan (left)
with District Conservationist Ranae
Ganske-Cerizo (right) completed
eight designs.*



*District Conservationist
Matt Wung (left) with Civil
Engineer Drew Stout (right)
who completed six designs.*

PIA-East engineers recently collaborated in a unique combined effort to support the Hoolehua Field Office on Molokai with stockwater and irrigation designs. Hoolehua had an unusually large number of sign ups for Farm Bill programs, so NRCS engineers from the Big Island and Oahu volunteered to assist Wailuku Service Center engineer Elskin Allan, who is responsible for Maui, Lanai, Molokai and Kooholawe. Altogether, this combined team contributed twenty-six significant designs for Hoolehua in only two months. Photographs above illustrate the three top-performing designers receiving USDA Certificates of Appreciation signed by PIA Director Larry Yamamoto and presented by their District Conservationists.

--Bill Hollingsworth

Focus on the Field: Surveying for Koloa on Kaua'i

Article and photos by Dr. Gregory A. Koob, State Biologist

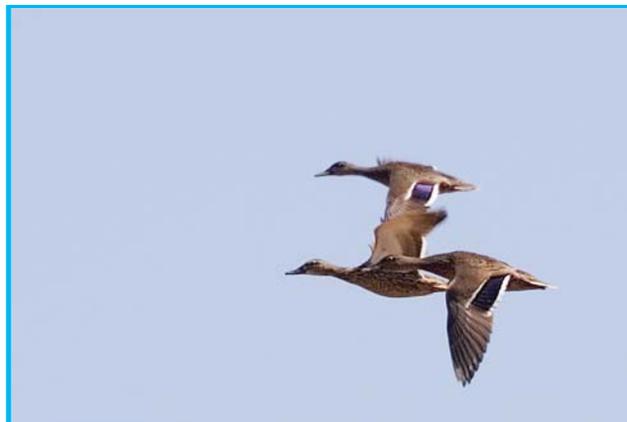
In April of this year, we conducted a survey for Koloa (Hawaiian Duck, *Anas wyvillana*) nests on Kaua'i. The survey was conducted to gather data for an Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The survey was conducted by me, Michelle Clark, Kimberly Uyehara (TSP), Chris Mullen (USFWS – Safe Harbors), and Adonia Henry (USFWS – Partners Program). The survey site is a wetland restoration project jointly funded by NRCS and USFWS. The wetlands are being restored for Ae'o (Hawaiian Stilt), Alae ula (Hawaiian Common Moorhen), and Alae ke'oke'o (Hawaiian Coot). An adjoining riparian area is possibly going to be managed for Koloa using a combination of mowing and grazing. It is the mowing and grazing action that will be covered by the section 7 consultation. All other actions have already been covered by an earlier section 7 consultation.

A baseline is needed to determine if Koloa are already using the site for nesting, or if there is suitable habitat for nesting. The reason nesting is of a concern is because that is when the birds are most vulnerable to human (mowing or grazing management) disturbance. Two days of surveys thoroughly covered more than 60 acres of potential Koloa nesting areas. No nests were found but Koloa and Pueo were flushed on both days.

Photo captions from top to bottom:

1. Koloa were previously seen flying over the survey area.
2. The first day of the survey was tough going at times. It could get hard keeping an eye on the other surveyors (Kim Uyehara was hidden by the tall California grass and shrubs in the field).
3. Open water attracts Koloa and other Hawaiian waterbirds. It is believed that Koloa will nest in the surrounding grass and shrub lands and lead their ducklings to the water after they hatch. Nests have been found nearly a mile away from open water elsewhere in Hawai'i.
4. Koloa tracks confirm that the ducks are spending time in the area.





Recognition Awards

Spot Awards:

Darlene Cho, Keith Harada, Reese Libby, Jeff Knowles, Lex Riggle, David Clausnitzer, Jay Doronila, Kawika Duvauchelle, Andres Juario, Martin Naputi, Elskin Allan, Michelle Clark, Carl Hashimoto, Kori Hisashima, Gail Ichikawa, James Ino, Dennis Kimberlin, Denise Light, Athena Pratt, Kahana Stone, Mike Whitt, Eileen Winkle, Carolyn Wong, Larry Yamamoto, Wally Jennings, Chad Kacir, Jeff Knowles, Lex Riggle, Harry Toki, Matt Wung, Jolene Lau, Colleen Simpson, Craig Smith, Scott Crockett, Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Susan Kubo, Mike Bajinting, Kori Hisashima, Pat Conner, Amy Saunders, and Brent Schumacher.

Length of Service – 5 years: Kawika Duvauchelle, Dennis Kimberlin, Michelle Clark, Jay Doronila, Jackie Flores, Kori Hisashima, Chad Kacir, Camille Kimbrough, Gregory Koob, Reese Libby, Cheryl Morton, Pat Niemeyer, Athena Pratt, Mike Robotham, Carol Sampaia, Kahana Stone, Drew Stout, Anton Tornito, Bobby Vandivort, Sherman White, Michael Whitt, and Carolyn Wong.

Length of Service – 10 years: Pam Aguon, Scott Crockett, Brie Darr, Gwen Gilbert, Wally Jennings, Carol Kawachi, Mike Kolman, Jolene Lau, Bart Lawrence, Sherry Takai, Sam Taylor, and Eileen Winkle.

Length of Service – 15 years: Cynthia Ansotigue, Jocelyn Bamba, Tim Brasuell, Darlene Cho, Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Bob Gavenda, Chris Jasper, Kevin Kingvig, Ken Kramer, Denise Light, Lori Metz, Hud Minshew, Martin Naputi, Cynthia Shishido, Colleen Simpson, Les Suehiro, Joe Takai, and Shirley Yamaguchi.

Length of Service – 20 years: Shirley Nakamura, Dudley Kubo, Tony Ingersoll, Barbara Fossum, Michael Hashimoto, April Harden, Carl Hashimoto, Kurencio Ngowakl, Morgan Puaa, and Matt Wung.

Length of Service – 25 years: Keith Harada, Laurie Ho, Gail Ichikawa, Noel Ide, James Ino, Susan Kubo, Lex Riggle, Tony Rolfes, Glenn Sakamoto, Patricia Shade, Gary Shimizu, Steve Skipper, Harry Toki, Nathan Varns, Jeff Wheaton, and Larry Yamamoto.

Length of Service – 30 years: Mike Bajinting, Pat Conner, Jeff Knowles, and Michael Hayama.

Length of Service – 35 years: Robert Joy

Personnel Update

Incoming:

Lehuanani Angay, Office Automation Assistant, Hilo, HI
Dan Bloedel, Resource Conservationist, Palau
Diane Funke, Human Resource Specialist, State Office
Chuck Reeves, IT Specialist, State Office
Tony Rolfes, Assistant State Soil Scientist, State Office
Melissa Skillings, Contract Specialist, State Office
Andrea Thompson, STEP, Wailuku, HI
Denise Wiedenheft, Soil Conservationist, State Office

Outgoing:

Gwen Gilbert - Washington, DC
Camille Kimbrough - Beltsville, MD
Ken Kramer, resigned
Kari Ann Kumashiro - resigned
James Lum – retired
Paul Scales - Spokane, WA
Jaquay Soriano - resigned
Paul Van Ryzin - Delta, CO
Harrison Vidinha - resigned



Recognition Awards (Continued)

Extra Effort:

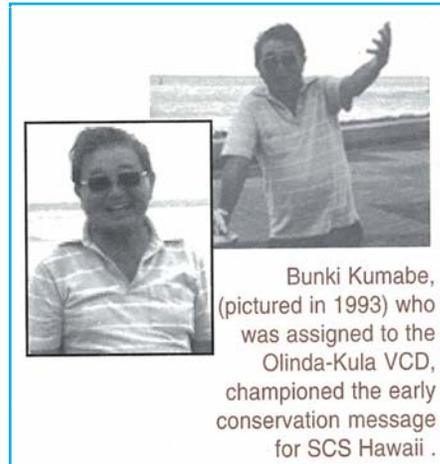
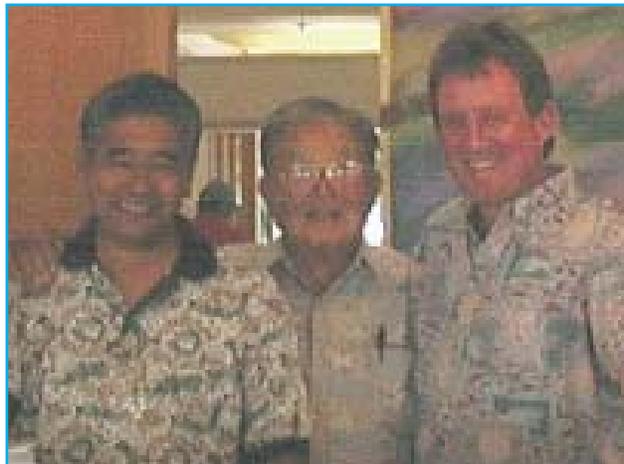
Cynthia Ansotigue, Shirley Yamaguchi, Ken Kramer, Kurencio Ngowakl, Anton Tornito, Bob Gavenda, Jocelyn Bamba, Darlene Cho, Cherry Sriben, Sherry Takai, Eileen Winkle, Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Karl Mikasa, Tim Brasuell, Keith Harada, Al Pecson, Brent Schumacher, and Jeff Wheaton.

Performance:

Sherry Takai, Cynthia Ansotigue, Carol Kawachi, Hud Minshew, Chris Jasper, Dennis Kimberlin, Jolene Lau, Bart Lawrence, Mike Robotham, Jeff Wheaton, Kawika Duvauchelle, Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Camille Kimbrough, Jeff Knowles, Denise Light, James Eller, Lex Riggle, Jackie Flores, Larry Yamamoto, Joe Takai, Sam Taylor, Athena Pratt, Michelle Clark, Gail Ichikawa, Bob Joy, Gregory Koob, Lori Metz, Glenn Sakamoto, Eileen Winkle, Al Pecson, Tim Brasuell, and Pat Conner.

Time Off: Athena Pratt

In Loving Memory of Bunki Kumabe



Bunki Kumabe, (pictured in 1993) who was assigned to the Olinda-Kula VCD, championed the early conservation message for SCS Hawaii .

On behalf of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Kumabe Family. Although Bunki will be whole heartedly missed, he will never be forgotten.

It was Bunki's dedication to conservation that helped to firmly establish our agency's Hawaii location in 1946. We are deeply appreciative of all his hard work dating back to the very first Volunteer Conservation District on Maui. When Bunki learned that the Soil Conservation Service was not approved under the Territory, he dashed a letter off to our agency's regional office and alerted them of the pressing need to have a permanent SCS presence in Hawaii. After our regional office reviewed his letter and recognized the support and persistence he displayed, our office doors reopened in Honolulu.

The bond between NRCS and the Conservation District is strong and the passion for conservation that Bunki displayed is clear. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. Please know that the NRCS family treasures the memories of working with him.

--by Larry Yamamoto

'08 EQIP Summary in PIA

OFFICE	CONTRACTS	ACRES
Aiea	4	116.5
American Samoa	8	5.5
Guam	2	23.9
Hilo	8	3,066.8
Hoolehua	21	1,972.8
Kahului	8	86.3
Kamuela	6	2,838
Kealahou	16	326.3
Lihue	9	1,493
Saipan	19	106.5
TOTAL	101	10,035.6



District Conservationist, Scott Crockett did a presentation in February 2008 to help explain, "How to get the most from your planting." The event was co-sponsored by United States Embassy and the College of Micronesia.

GLCI Workshop



Some people think pasture management involves letting the cows into the pasture and then forgetting about them; however, neither the cows nor the pasture do very well with this system. Based on the needs identified by the Tinian RC&D island committee, the Marianas Resource Conservation & Development Council (MRC&DC) requested the NRCS to provide a pasture management workshop for all the islands in the Marianas: Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. These workshops, sponsored by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), were two years in the making. GLCI workshop presenters taught the approximately 50 participating ranchers and government agency personnel why there is more to raising livestock and to good pasture management than the simple practice of letting the cows loose in a big open field.

Grazing experts from NRCS included the State Rangeland Management Specialist from Hawaii, Loretta Metz; Rangeland Management Specialists Jeff Repp, and Gene Fults from the NRCS West Regional Technical Center in Portland, Oregon; and Area Soil Scientist, Dr. Robert Gavenda, from the Guam Pacific Islands Area Office, who provided soils training. Special thanks to Jocelyn Bamba, D.C. – Guam and her staff; Scott Crockett, D.C. – Saipan and his staff; and the Pacific Islands Area staff for making these workshops a success. They began the workshops in Guam on April 15th, proceeded to Tinian, then Saipan, and completed their one-day workshops on Rota on April 21st. Interestingly enough, Tinian and Rota had the highest attendance.

Pasture management is very important; it is the proper treatment and use of pastureland resulting in the ecologically and economically sustainable production of livestock. Pasture management is a conservation practice that most people can use to prolong the life of desirable forage species, to maintain or improve the quality and quantity of forage for livestock, to protect the soil, and to reduce water loss. To apply intensive grazing, you must practice pasture management. An intensive grazing method maintains a proper balance between forage production and forage consumption. No management will mean there will be no forage (grass) for your livestock.

Participants learned a wide variety of topics related to pasture management from soils, recommended plants for the best quality livestock forage, pasture planting techniques for forage grasses and legumes, weeds and their control, animal nutrition, animal and plant morphology, and to think in terms of Animal Units (A. U.) based on the intake of forage of a 1,000 pound animal.

SEVERAL RULES OF THUMB THE RANCHERS WERE TAUGHT: Graze half, keep half of the pasture forage. Mowing is Management and Management is Mowing. Cows need 12 to 15 gallons of clean freshwater per day; otherwise, consumption of forage grasses is reduced as well as production. Forage grasses need approximately 45 days of rest between grazing to recover and grow during the dry season. Eight fields is a good number to provide the needed rest for the forage. Finally, the number of cows the land can support is based on the dry season, which is the limiting factor for the number of cows or other livestock that can be grazed.

“To be successful at pasture management,” Monsignor Antonelli on Rota told me one day, “your heart must be in the work.” He uses electric fences in a rotational grazing system. He used to spend two to three hours a day taking care of his stargrass; and his good health, approaching 90 years of age, is a side benefit to the time he spent in the field. “The secret to good pasture management,” he said, “is to listen to the cows. When they complain loudly, they are running out of good food.” The MRC&DC would like to express its thanks, once again, to all the people involved in the preparation of the Marianas GLCI Pasture Management Workshops.

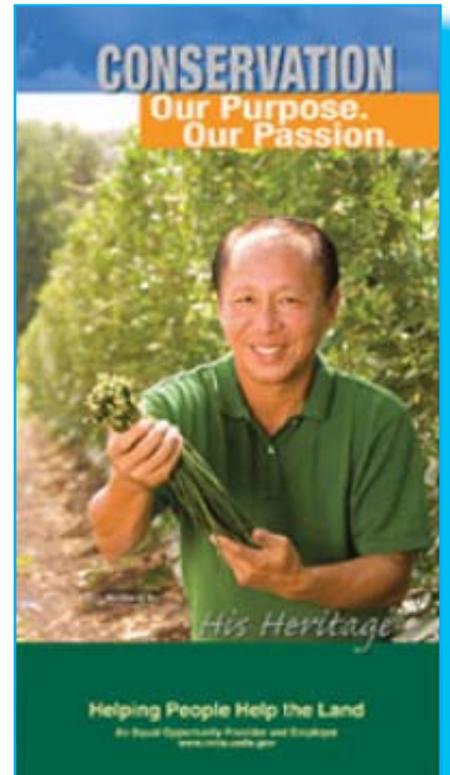
--by Ken Kramer

Celebrating APA Heritage Month

In honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May, it gives me great pleasure to highlight the Ho Family from Kahuku. More than 100 success stories were submitted and Hawaii's farmer was selected as one of eight in the nation to be featured in NRCS's newest campaign, "Conservation: Our Purpose. Our Passion."

As a result of the photo shoot and interview, a five-minute video was produced, as well as a variety of displays, banners, and post cards. To watch the video online, order free campaign products, or to reserve a display for outreach events, visit www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov and click on the link for the national campaign. Brochures and fact sheets are coming shortly.

Along with Ho Farms, we proudly recognize the other featured customer, employees, and volunteers from the Pacific Islands Area. Congratulations to Gabriel Evangelista, Cynthia Shishido, Jackie Flores, Kristen Coelho, and Friends of the Marianas! You can read their stories at <http://www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov/features/ourpurpose/index.asp>.



Asian Pacific Islander Perspectives

As the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Female Representative on the National Civil Rights Advisory Committee (NCRC) to the Chief, Pamela Aguon, Soil Conservationist with the Northern Mariana Islands Field Office on Saipan, has been traveling throughout the country providing training and perspectives on API culture and worldviews. Recently, she co-taught "Asian Pacific Islander Perspectives Awareness Training" to chairpersons of the Civil Rights Advisory Committee during NCRC meetings in Las Vegas, and Memphis. The training was a joint effort with Phuc Vu, State Design Engineer of the USDA-NRCS Portland, Oregon office and API Male Representative for the NCRC. The training covered socio-economics and demographics of Asian communities and enclaves, as well as the geography and cultural distribution of the Pacific Islands serviced by NRCS.

Ms. Aguon's presentation focuses on the challenges of servicing and communicating across field offices spanning the international dateline, several time zones and an area of coverage greater than the entire continental United States. She also discussed cultural awareness, differences between the diverse Asian/Pacific Islander languages and heritages, varying degrees of westernization and islander family traditions. During her presentation, Aguon made a point to highlight contemporary issues of island landusers, such as land control, motivation to farm, economic constraints, political, climate, and the challenges of cross-cultural communication among the various cultures within the NRCS West Area.

Finishing off her presentation, Ms. Aguon discussed her personal experiences as a young, female, Pacific Islander minority, including the lessons she has learned about breaking down barriers to effective communication in order to improve communication etiquette, increase landuser comprehension, and foster professional and cultural respect among her co-workers, partners and cooperators.

A copy of Aguon's presentation can be accessed within the my.NRCS webpage under the "National Civil Rights Committee" link at the bottom right of the home page. The Power Point title is, "API Perspectives."

--by Pam Aguon

Civil Rights--I Want to Be Outstanding!

This January brought NRCS employees a revised performance appraisal format. Supervisors have been working feverishly converting their staff's appraisals to the new system. One of the results has been questions on what it takes to earn a Superior or Outstanding rating.

Most performance elements are pretty clear and relate directly to your duties. They might include such items as Mission Results, Execution of Duties, Communication, and Individual Contributions the Team. Most everyone knows their job and can come up with actions that exceed a fully successful rating. But the Personal Contacts - EO/CR element sometimes baffles folks on how to be better than fully successful. How can I be a leader if I don't make hiring decisions or direct office operations?

The EO/CR statement for non-supervisory staff generally reads "Routinely displays courteous and tactful behavior towards internal and external customers, supervisors, coworkers, and/or team members. Projects a positive, and professional image of USDA. Performs duties in a manner which consistently demonstrates fairness, cooperation, and respect towards coworkers, office visitors, and all others in the performance of official business. Demonstrates an awareness of EO/CR policies and responsibilities of Agency and departmental goals of valuing a diverse, yet unified workforce."

So, how can you be outstanding? Will a good smile and attitude be enough? Not likely. Remember that a single action, unless pretty monumental, generally isn't enough to get an outstanding rating. Here are a few ideas of what you can do to raise above others in being an Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Superstar:

Each year there are multiple special emphasis weeks. Organize an event in your office during this period (or any other time) that highlights a specific group. You might: Invite a speaker to your office to speak about diversity in the workplace or what barriers our programs have in serving their group. Arrange to speak to a group about opportunities available for employment with NRCS or our programs. Identify under served groups and develop an outreach plan. Talk to these groups and find out what their conservation needs are. For example, specialty crop growers,

limited resource producers or groups that haven't participated with NRCS in the past. Lead a discussion on how your office can better work with an under served group by removing barriers to their participation.

Recruit, recruit, and recruit! Many forget that even though you may not have hiring authority, you can be part of the recruitment process. When a job opening comes up, seek out qualified women and minorities. Introduce them to what NRCS does and be directly involved in helping them make contact with our personnel section. Be available to help them through the process of filling out applications and forms. Contact one of your past college professors, advisors or local high school teachers and ask them to refer good minority or women to you so you can tell them about NRCS career opportunities. Special hiring authorities exist that can be used to hire persons still in high school or college. Look for outstanding candidates when you're doing a presentation at a high school or college and approach them to discuss opportunities NRCS offers. Follow-up and encourage them to talk to our personnel section. Apply for a position on the Equal Opportunity/Civil Rights committee. Become directly involved as a Special Emphasis Program Manager representing a specific group. Submit articles to our Public Affairs Specialist on an EEO/CR subject for inclusion in Current Developments. Maybe you have an outstanding project that just happens to have been done by a limited resource producer.

Remember, NRCS has the expectation that you will offer our services to all individuals on an equal basis without discrimination. That's fully successful. To be outstanding, you need to go beyond just being a "good" employee. It takes extra effort and commitment. And finally, document what you've done. Don't expect your supervisor to keep a detailed list of your accomplishments. Bring a detailed list of what you've done above and beyond "fully successful" in all your appraisal elements and present the information during your appraisal review.

--by Bob Bartholomew & Mike Hashimoto

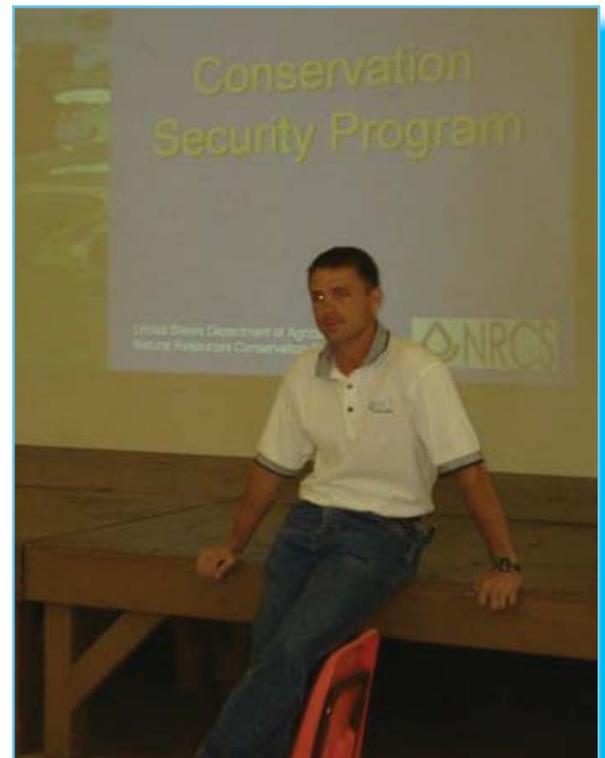
RC&D Corner: Kaua`i

Of the many projects going on, the Garden Island RC&D Council helped with the Arbor Day event on Kaua`i recently. A small army of volunteers set up informational displays on everything you wanted to know about plants. The community was invited to trek through the displays in order to earn tokens to exchange for plants such as kou, milo, hala, Hawaiian hibiscus, noni, 'uki'uki, a'ali'i, pohinahina, and gardenia.

--Carolynn Lum



CSP Workshops Held



Self Assessment Workshops for the 2008 Conservation Security Program were conducted recently to help producers verify their eligibility. Jocelyn Bamba led the workshops in Southern Guam while Mike Whitt (pictured right) led the workshops in Hilo and Ka`u. The deadline to apply was extended to May 30, 2008.



Photo Contest Winners



Photo Contest Winners: Bob Gavenda (top), Gregory Koob (bottom left), and Carolyn Wong (bottom right).



Congratulations to Bob Gavenda, Gregory Koob, and Carolyn Wong for being this round of photo contest winners! For the Conservation category, we had eight nominations. For the Cultural category, we had four nominations, and for the Scenic category, we had nine nominations. The Leadership Team judged the photos on Appropriateness to Category, Composition, Creativity, and Aesthetics.

The winner for the Conservation category is *Bob Gavenda*, Assistant State Soil Scientist in the Guam Area Office. His picture is of a clown fish.

The winner for the Scenic category is *Gregory Koob*, State Biologist in the Honolulu State Office. His picture is of Ohia Lehua blooms at the Puu Waawaa Forest Bird Sanctuary on the Big Island.

The winner for the Cultural category is *Carolyn Wong*, Soil Conservationist in the Waimea Field Office. Her picture is of an Ohia tree on Mauna Kea.

To view all the photos that were submitted for the contest, see www.hi.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.

If you are interested in participating in the next contest, please email one JPEG or TIFF per category to jolene.lau@hi.usda.gov. The deadline to submit photos for the next issue of *Current Developments* is due on July 31, 2008.

