



Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
Pacific Islands Area

East Hawai'i Local Work Group Meeting

July 23, 2014

9:00 am – 11:30 am

**AGENDA**

Hilo Field Office  
154 Waiuanuenu  
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Hilo, HI 96720  
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1. Introductions
2. Role of the USDA Local Work Group (History and Expected Outcomes)
3. Role of the State Technical Advisory Committee
4. Overview of Conservation Planning and USDA Farm Bill Programs
  - a. 2014 Funding (Round 1)

Category	# Of Contracts	Amount
Cropland Veteran	1	\$ 2,507.00
Cropland	43	\$ 457,055.00
Farmstead/AFO	17	\$ 715,970.00
Forest	12	\$ 264,479.00
Seasonal High Tunnel	7	\$ 75,138.00
Wildlife	4	\$ 239,956.00
Pasture Veteran	2	\$ 200,431.00
Pasture/Range	17	\$ 2,088,439.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>\$ 4,043,975.00</b>

NWQI	4	\$ 369,053.00
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National Policy:

- 60% of funds go to Livestock (grazing or AFO)
- 5% of funds go to Wildlife
- 5% of funds go to Beginning Farmers
- 5% of funds go to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

b. 2014 Priorities

- i. Water Quality Degradation: Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters
- ii. Soil Erosion: Sheet, rill & wind erosion
- iii. Degraded Plant Condition: Excessive plant pest pressure
- iv. Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife: Habitat degradation
- v. Insufficient Water: Inefficient use of irrigation water

c. 2014 Ranking Criteria

d. 2014 Payment Schedules

5. Discussion and Action Items:

- a. East Hawaii County Resource Concerns

- b. List 3 resource concerns in priority for each Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
  - i. Ka'u
  - ii. Puna
  - iii. Waiakea
  - iv. Hamakua
- c. Local Ranking Questions
- d. New or Updated Practices that Local Workgroup wants NRCS to focus on in FY 2015
- e. Payment Schedules

### East Hawai'i Local Work Group Meeting 07-23-14

	Name	Agency/Organization	Phone	email
1	Kori Hsashima	NRCS	933-8359	kori.hsashima@hi.usda.gov
2	Bob ERNST	Rancher/Farmer	968-8611	RCE1@isp.com
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4	Amy Bugado	WSWCD	959-6449	amybug@hawaiiantel.net
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9	Diver English	Puna PSWCO	430-0323	oenglish@whshipuna.com
10	Aileen Yeh	Puna SWCD/FSA COC	936-2671	ayeh@hawaii.rr.com
11	Amelia Drury	Waikeke, Puna, & Keolu SWCD	933-8366	amelia.drury@hi.nacdn.net
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## East Hawaii Local Work Group

### Minutes July 23, 2014

In attendance: Kori Hisashima (NRCS District Conservationist), Kanoë Malani (Hamakua SWCD Planner), Kamran Fujimoto (State Department of Agriculture), Jill Ficke-Beaton (NRCS Soil Conservationist), Bob Ernst (Farmer), Aileen Yeh (Puna SWCD and Rancher), Spencer Nagata (NRCS Soil Conservationist), Doug Beaton (Hamakua SWCD and Rancher), Oliver English (Puna SWCD and Rancher), Laila Jayyousi (NRCS Soil Conservationist), Amy Bugado (Waiakea SWCD), Les Takayama (Waiakea SWCD), Amelia Drury (Waiakea, Puna & Ka'u Planner), Alicia Greene (NRCS Engineer).

#### Introductions

Kori gave an overview of the role of the USDA Local Work Group (History and Expected Outcomes), the role of the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), and USDA Farm Bill Program funding for 2014 EQIP Round 1.

#### Fund Pools

- Seasonal High Tunnel- used to protect crops from rain, not able to use for protection from Nene because considered targeting Nene. Limitation in size, however used for high value crops and only for crops in the ground. Could the tunnel be mounted on rails that could protect seedlings then once established, slid to cover another 2000+  $ft^2$ . Limited to hoop houses pre-engineered and available from commercial vendors.
- Additional Veteran Preference that enables veterans to be high priority.
- Grazing Livestock is delegated 60% of funds. Nationally given high priority. Grazing operations or CAFO's.
- Wildlife receives 5%.
- Beginning Farmers 5%
- Socially Disadvantaged 5%- recently had a historically disadvantaged workshop and HFO serves 70-90 %
- NWQI- Hilo has been allocated \$360,000 for projects with the watershed. 4 pig farmers have recently been pre-approved.
- Priorities for 2014
  - Soil Erosion
  - Water Quality degradation surface water and ground water animal feeding operations
  - Degraded plant condition/Excessive Plant Pressure- noxious and invasive weeds
  - Inadequate Wildlife Habitat and Habitat degradation
  - Inefficient use of water- needs to have been irrigated 2 out of the last five years and an improved efficiency through EQIP (AMA does not require 2 out of 5 but much smaller fund pool)

#### Priorities for 2015: Open for discussion

- Question for IPM- Coffee: Bearer Bore and another virus (Emara Virus) spread by mites
  - Conservation vs production can limit our application of funds for IPM
  - Do some of our practices contribute to spread of pests...i.e. mulch? Potentially contributes to spread. Currently under investigation by HDOA.
  - Fire Ants- Nurseryman are experiencing extensive expenses and even fruit crops such as Bananas because the fire ants are farming the sugars from the fruits. Fire Ants mitigation is something that could be applied to wildlife habitat since birds and pollinators are affected. Also confined animals such as poultry, piggeries, especially those using mulch from the solid waste transfer areas that is not treated by heat or insecticides for pests such as fire ants. Since it is free it is not allowed to sit for long, people haul it away as quickly as it is accumulated.
- Fence:
  1. Is single wire a possibility? The trend towards intensively managed pasture is beneficial towards forage production and recovery...soil health related?
  2. Offset Electric is valuable since some areas are not allowed to use barbed. Makes fences more effective and extends life span. Also addresses multi-species grazing challenges.
  3. Woven wire fences, costs are climbing. Roll of 330' 12.5 gauge as much as \$300+. On sale for \$280. Cost of steel rising, a t-post is between \$12.00 and 14.00.
  4. Fencing steep or difficult areas with undulating terrain means more h-braces and line posts...with soil limiting fences, can there be terrain limiting or slope limiting?
- Forage and Biomass: To ensure success, consider the possibility of adding fertilizer/lime since we have had instances of low success or complete failure without if, and done as directed. Also extend the recommendation for minimum grazing height to 18" to ensure new planting can withstand 1<sup>st</sup> time grazing pressure. Recent prices for signal when available is \$10.50/lb seeding rate of 8lb/acre.
- Cover Crop: Costs reported for simple seed, not mixes as high as \$60/ bag and covering 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an acre. Costs for seeds as much as \$2000.00/acre. Also cost rise when inoculated vs. non. Right now CC is capped at a dollar value (\$15,000) or maximum acreage (6 acre).
- Brush Management: (Low payment rate- Considering new equipment that is being utilized that takes the place of multiple practices- Land Clearing- Mechanical, Brush Management- Chemical and Herbaceous weed control-chemical all low payment rates compared to the costs of implementing practice.
  1. Hydro axe
  2. Gyro
  3. Excavator head

All being used for brush management that eliminates or minimizes soil disturbance. Can be limited by terrain different equipment is useful for. Consider practice modification that allows implementation and fair compensation for using this equipment over dozing.
- Herbaceous Weed Control: Consider biological Control- such as prescribed grazing with high intensity.

- Pipeline: Should cost of fittings, PRV's, air release valves that engineers recommend/require be considered?
- Watering Facilities (troughs): Consider the rising cost of fittings, galvanized, compression, float valves.
- Contour Farming: Currently a 5 year practice, can we apply to annually tilled crops or short term/single crop leases?
- Forest Stand Improvements: Very low rates compared to costs to implement.
- Prescribed Grazing: Can it be adjusted for the intensity of management? High, medium and low?
- Native Forest Plantings in tree/shrub establishment: For dry and arid lands- can watering devices for the first year or until established be considered? Catchment tank and distribution of water efficient irrigation? Do not want to be setting up for failure.
- Soil Health: Compost facilities incorporated for organic farmers? What about planting for vegetative material for composting? Overall including soil health as a targeted resource concern
- Wind Break Renovation: Very low cost share especially considering some of the biggest problem windbreaks were established as recommended and now huge and too expensive to maintain of function as desired.

#### **Other Topics Discussed:**

##### **Ranking-**

1. Consider follow through and successful completion of EQIP contracts in the past.
2. If addressed targeted resource concerns successfully, with only a few left, consider credit for success.
3. If used for ranking, consider the history of the cooperator and if schedule incompliance was either in control of or out of control of the cooperator.