

Kulawaiho'opili Dedication

By Kori Hisashima, Hilo District Conservationist

Kapapala Ranch was established in 1860. From 1860 to 1920 dirt lined water holes were the entire source of water from the ranch. With the onset of sugar cane, Makakupu Tunnel was built. The first piped water to the ranch began in the late 1920's, but by the end of World War II a much more sophisticated water system evolved. Water was piped 12 miles from Makakupu, gravity flowing to a pumping station. From there, the water was lifted to 4,600 ft. elevation on two lateral lines. This was the water system in place when J. Gordon Cran purchased Kapapala Ranch in 1977. Lani Cran Petrie is the current Ranch Manager and the daughter of J. Gordon Cran.

The devastating 1983 earthquake that rocked Ka'u also collapsed Makakupu Tunnel and approximately 3,500 feet of 3 inch steel pipe that traversed the nearby Wood Valley Canyon. The ranch hauled water for six months. The Cran's replaced the pipe with HDPE pipe which was new on the market. Two 2 inch pipes were suspended on stainless cable and crossed the canyon. Twenty-nine years later, in 2012, the stainless cable was corroded and gone and the HDPE pipes suspend themselves and have been flawless since their installation in 1983. This was Kapapala Ranch's first cost-share water improvement project with NRCS.

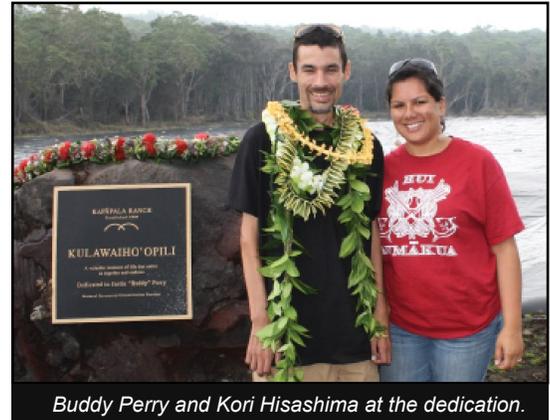
Again with the help of NRCS in 1999, Kapapala Ranch was able to build their first substantial means of storing water. They built a 3.3 million gallon reservoir at Ainapo. That reservoir caught rain water and was filled with the unused water from Makakupu Tunnel. In 2011, NRCS helped Kapapala ranch to install a 4.9 million gallon water reservoir at the 4,750 ft. elevation in the upper rainforest of the ranch. The site was selected by J. Gordon Cran along with Lani and her Husband Bill. The reservoir was completed in September of 2011 and was dedicated to J. Gordon Cran who passed away in 2007 at the age of 80. Beside this reservoir stands a large rock with a plaque in dedication to Gordon.

Their next goal was to fill Kaniwai with catchment water, and have the ranch no longer rely on Makakupu and fossil fuels to distribute water over 34,000 acres. In 2012, NRCS Soil Conservationist Justin "Buddy" Perry worked with Lani to submit a payment limitation waiver for EQIP. Buddy's hard work and dedication paid off with a waiver approval, and EQIP contract to install water harvesting catchment and water distribution system to service the entire ranch and it's approximately 1,200 animal units. The water harvesting catchment was completed in the latter part of last year, and the distribution system is slated to be complete over this summer.

Makakupu tunnel historically delivered 9 million gallons of water annually to the ranch, but was a dangerous 400 ft. drop from the top of the mountain to the tunnel, that needed to be serviced periodically by the ranch. Since last year, the new catchment and reservoir has collected about 9 million gallons, and will serve as a source to gravity flow to the entire ranch, all the way across 9 miles to 'Ohaieka.

The Cran's became good friends with their NRCS Soil Conservationist, Buddy Perry. Buddy became stricken with an illness that forced him into disability retirement from NRCS in 2012. He was not able to see the newest project at Kapapala Ranch come to fruition during his career, but the Cran's did keep in touch with Buddy during the construction, and kept him abreast of the progress. After the catchment was completed, the Cran's decided to dedicate the Water Harvesting Catchment to Buddy. So there, next to the catchment is a large rock, bearing the name "Kulawaiho'opili". A Hawaiian word that means a valuable resource of life that unites us together and endures. Which ironically refers to both the water, and their friend and conservationist, Justin "Buddy" Perry.

The catchment was dedicated on February 22, 2014. It was dedicated in traditional Hawaiian fashion with a pule (prayer and blessing) and 'oli (chant) asking for blessings upon Kapapala Ranch, Ka 'Ohana Cran and Ka 'Ohana Perry. Buddy's 'ohana, close friends, and former NRCS co-workers were in attendance, as well as family and friends of the Cran 'ohana, some of whom worked on the ranch in its earlier years. It was a day full of love and appreciation for the amazing Conservationist Buddy was at NRCS, and continues to be, even after his retirement. This is just one example of the many projects Buddy worked tirelessly on to help the farmers and ranchers in our community. At the dedication Lani said, "We thank our friends at NRCS that helped us, because we couldn't do this by ourselves. But, this water and the blessing of the NRCS to help us do it is going to take care of this land." There was plenty of food, drink, fellowship, love, and laughter after the blessing! Kamran Fujimoto, close friend and former co-worker of Buddy said, "This was an amazing day honoring Buddy for all of his hard work and determination in helping Kapapala Ranch to continue the Paniolo tradition well beyond the 21st century!"



Buddy Perry and Kori Hisashima at the dedication.



William Puckett, Acting Director

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

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Message from the Acting Director

Aloha,

I am excited about the opportunity to serve as your Acting Director for 120 days. I look forward to working in PIA and meeting as many folks as possible. As you might expect, Alabama is slightly different than PIA and I have a lot to learn.

My first 30 days have been extremely informative and very busy. I have visited all the field offices in Hawaii and plan to visit western PIA in August. I have been impressed with the operations, customers and districts I have visited to date. I attended HACD and met with the DC's on the East team. There is great potential for conservation in PIA and I am glad to have this opportunity to help.

I am available to visit with you by phone or in-person (if I am in a field office near you), just schedule a time with Cheryl. I am focused on looking forward and determining how I can best help PIA over the course of my detail. I am working with partners on the new Resource Conservation Partnership Program or RCPP to encourage applications for improving PIA's resources. I hope you are also working with partners and encouraging them to apply.

I want to remind you about the upcoming soil health training and how important it is to work with local farmers and ranchers to improve soil health. Our agency has always been about Soil Health and we are reaffirming our commitment to make soils productive and healthy. Keeping farms productive and farmers prosperous is vital to a sustainable rural economy. The prescription for healthy soils is not magic, we all know the formula; (do not disturb) + (keep it covered) / (plant variations) = healthy soil.

I hope all of you enjoy working in conservation and ensuring that farming and ranching remain a viable alternative in PIA. I appreciate your dedication to conservation and all the hard work you do.

Mahalo,
Bill

Team Building USDA: Team USDA Guam Service Center Celebrates Chamorro Month



Buenas yan Håfa Adai
(Hello and Greetings from Guam)



USDA Service Center Tiyan, Guam celebrates Gupot Mes Chamorro

The staff and management of Team USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), Farm Service Agency (FSA), OCIO and Agency guest - Small Business Administration (SBA) celebrating Heritage and Cultural month (Mes Chamorro) on March 24, 2014. The event was filled with local foods and activities like grating (Kåmyo) coconut contest, Young coconut (månha) juice drinking contest, coconut weaving (tufok) demonstration and coconut candy (kanden Niyok) making from the grating contest. 'Si Yu'us Ma'åse' and Thank you to all who shared and displayed our local heritage and culture, event was filled with laughter, excitement and hidden talents from office folks.



Left to right: NRCS ETV, Anthony Tornito, Anton Tornito-NRCS, Kris Blas-RD, Gigi Mueller-SBA, Jeff Wheaton-NRCS, Christine Sablan-RD, Brent Schumacher-NRCS, Bernie Balajadia-RD, Tony Barcinas-RD, Joe Diego-RD and Steve Cruz-RD. Not pictured: (taking photo) Bart Lawrence-NRCS, Jackie Flores-NRCS, Tom Camacho-FSA, Doreen Rivera-FSA, John Santos-OCIO/ITS, Ken Lujan-SBA, Adrienne Loerzel, (NOAA -Coastal Mgmt.)



I Nénkannó Guahan...The local food.

Earth Team Volunteers



ETV Danny Rosenkrans assisting Pohnpei Field Office staff Rodasio Samuel with much needed repairs to the training center.



ETV Hannah and Dirick Rosenkrans helping take measurements with office staff Rodasio Samuel and Gibson Santos at Pohnpei farm.

Outreach

Earth Team Volunteers Recruited at Youth Outreach

By: Pamela Sablan-Aguon

The Gineftao I Man Mo'na (GIMM) is an organization tailored to youth. It is an after-school program designed to teach the future generations the cultural ways of life from our ancestral roots. The coordinators mainly teach about how to live off the land and sea with respect to the local culture and with the limited resources available.

USDA staff, Soil Conservationist (Pam Sablan-Aguon), conducted a three part presentation to GIMM. Also present during this presentation was PIA-West Area Acting Assistant Director for Field Operations, Preston Irwin.

For the first part of the presentation, Sablan-Aguon presented to the youth organization with a brief overview on USDA and the Pacific Islands Service Area. Topics included geographical, cultural, political and environmental awareness. Sablan-Aguon also touched base on contemporary topics such as: language; motivation to farm; limited resources; financial assistance; 9 step planning process; politics; geographic isolation; compliance/enforcement; invasive species; T&E species; economic constraints; local partner capacity; contract labor; gift giving and culture; communication etiquette; communication process; flexibility; and overall respect.

Going into the second part of the presentation, Sablan-Aguon went into a show & tell mode displaying before/after conservation planning/application pictures and USDA's successes in addressing various natural resource concerns within various operations. This presentation show cased on how we "Help People Help the Land". This was an eye opener for the audience.

The presentation was then concluded with job/career opportunities with USDA. Areas covered within this segment of the presentation were: ETV; SCEP; STEP; and internships. The students were very much interested in our field of work.

Overall, the USDA staff presented to over 10 students and the organization's coordinators. The highlight of this youth outreach event was the recruitment of three new volunteers to begin their volunteer services during the summer of 2014.



Sablan-Aguon explains various agronomic conservation practices applied on a farm operation addressing various resource concerns identified during the planning phases.

Tinian Agricultural Fair 2014 Outreach

By: Pamela Sablan-Aguon

The agricultural fair for the Island of Tinian was not held for quite some time, but this year that changed. This year the Tinian Cattlemen's Association (TCA) organized the Tinian Agricultural Fair with the support of the Northern Marinas College-CREES, the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, the Tinian Legislative Delegation, and the Tinian Municipal Council with the cooperation of the Mayor's Office of Tinian and others. The agricultural fair was a success, being that it had not been active for some time.

Overall, the outreach activity, and the agricultural fair, was a success. A total of 42 youth groups and 22 adults visited the USDA booth during the events. NRCS was able to increase the number of CTA cooperators for the Island of Tinian, once again, as well as recruit new cooperators from the island of Saipan.



USDA NRCS, Pam Sablan-Aguon, interacts with students during the fair.



Presenter Eric Lee-Mader (Assistant Extension Professor at the University of Minnesota)

Pollinator Conservation Short Course at the `Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo

By: Laila Jayyousi

This pollinator training consisted of 6 speakers over 8 different modules on topics such as an Introduction and Importance of Pollinator Conservation, Conservation of Native Hawaiian Hylaeus Bees, Bee Friendly Farming, Nectar and Pollen Plants for Honeybees, Hawai'i Dept. of Agriculture Efforts to Protect Bees, Field Notes on Alternative Pollinators in the Agricultural Landscape, Case Study on Bee Keeping and Bee Conservation in Hawai'i. We were provided with a lot of very useful handouts and all the presentations were excellent!

The handouts given were excellent especially the Habitat Planting for Pollinators (PIA). This document is still in its draft form however every planner should have a copy. Particularly useful are the tables in the Appendix such as a list of native species that are important to pollinators and Pollinator Notes in Appendix H.



Some Familiar Faces at the Training.

Another point taken from this training was pesticide education and how farmers may be harming the very insects that support and improve their crop production. Mitigating pesticide damage (not spraying while crops are flowering), protecting insect nesting sites and understanding the value of pollinator species in regards to the overall production of their crop is critical to the success of a farm that is dependent on pollinators.

I also enjoyed hearing the term FarmScaping for pollinators which basically creates a pollinator friendly/supportive landscape by establishing windbreaks, hedgerows, cover crops and other practices to provide food, nests and shelter for pollinators. For example establishing a coastal hedge of Scaevola would provide food and shelter for pollinators along with rows of flowering cover crops. Also consider planning a variety of pollinator-friendly flowers which bloom all year.

I certainly hope that these types of training occur more often. We all benefited from it!



Jacqueline Vega Perez

Employee Spotlight

Jacqueline Vega Perez, Soil Scientist, is a new staff member in the MLRA soil survey office in Kealahou, Hawaii. She joined NRCS in 2011 as a Soil Scientist in Glenwood, Arkansas; and also worked in Wyoming participating in initial soil mapping of over 120,000 acres in Sweetwater County.

Jacqueline was born and raised in Puerto Rico so is very familiar with tropical environmental conditions. She is a graduate from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus (UPRM) majoring in Agronomy and Soils. She has also earned a Master's Degree in Soil Sciences from UPRM.

Her graduate studies work included numerous research projects related to soil and water quality. Jacqueline has also held positions providing support for the chemical, physical analysis of water and soil and plant tissue testing. After completing her graduate studies Jacqueline was a Soil Sciences Laboratory Instructor for UPRM.

Going Back to Cali



Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Kahului District Conservationist presents Joe Takai with a Certification of Appreciation.

Joe Takai will be transferring to Stockton, CA as a Soil Conservationist on May 20, 2014.

The Kahului Field Office recognized Joe Takai with a "Certificate of Appreciation" for his outstanding performance from March 11, 2012 to May 19, 2014.

Congratulations and best of luck to Joe in his promotion and new position. We will miss you!

Personnel Update

Incoming:

- ◆ Laura Nelson, Soil Conservationist, Kealahou
- ◆ Dr. William Puckett, Acting Director, State Office
- ◆ Jacqueline Vega-Perez, MLRA Soil Scientist

Outgoing:

- ◆ Christine Clarke, Returned to Massachusetts
- ◆ Jorge Guevara, resigned
- ◆ Nicholas Saumweber, Transfer to New Jersey
- ◆ Cynthia Stiles, Transfer to California
- ◆ Joe Takai, Transfer to California
- ◆ Brian Tom, resigned
- ◆ Ben Vinhateiro, resigned
- ◆ Sheryl Woo, retired

Length of Service:

- ◆ 10 Years: Karl Mikasa
- ◆ 20 Years: Arlene Rosenkrans & Gibson Santos
- ◆ 25 Years: Colleen Simpson



L-R: Gibson Santos, Miguel Ordonez, US Embassy, Arlene Rosenkrans, Christine Clarke, Cheryl Burkindine, Department of Interior.



Cynthia Stiles, Christine Clarke, and Brian Tom.