

## Ranching on Tinian

by Colleen Simpson, Area Resource Conservationist, Guam

A Marianas livestock revolution is underway on Tinian! For many hundreds of years Tinian was the Marianas meat shop, fresh on the hoof! Tinian served as a vital provisioning stop for fresh meat and related products for sailing ships crossing the vast Pacific Ocean. While the galleon ships of the past are no more, Tinian still today remains the Marianas source for high quality grass fed beef! A tradition that the staff of the CNMI Field Office are proud to support.

This centuries old tradition is further supported through the efforts of Roy N. Tsutsui, Defense Representative Political-Military Affairs Advisor and Defense Coordinating Officer Representative for Defense Support of Civil Authorities. Roy works closely with Tinian residents to support access to Department of Defense lease back lands. What are leaseback lands? The US government leases back approximately 6,458 acres (2,614 hectares) of the land for one dollar per acre per year. For the past thirty seven years Tinian ranchers have been leasing land to pasture cattle, goats and Philippine deer, and to grow crops.

According to Lawrence Duponcheel, Secretary of the Tinian Cattlemen’s Association, “The notable success of livestock production is due to many different efforts. Importantly, the cooperation and partnership from DoD with local government land agencies and the Tinian ranchers has been a fundamental element.” “This important effort was supported by the CNMI Field Office and Tinian Soil and Water Conservation District working directly with the Tinian lease holders to implement NRCS best management practices following NRCS ranch planning recommendations. The team provided training and transferred experience and knowledge to guide improvements in livestock production, health and breeding” said Duponcheel. “Along with Northern Mariana College – CREES referrals, Department of Land and Natural Resource equipment services and Department of Public Lands assistance helped secure land documentation required by USDA – NRCS.” added Duponcheel. “All these efforts, and more, has sparked a new era of sustainable livestock production on Tinian. It is great for Tinian, for the CNMI and for the Marianas,” shared Duponcheel.

Over 15 Tinian ranchers have sought assistance for their grazing and livestock operations in the last six years with NRCS. Working with the CNMI NRCS staff, Tinian ranchers first develop a ranch or farm plan that addresses resource concerns (i.e. erosion, limited water, noxious weeds, etc.). Then NRCS planners work with the lease holder to identify appropriate practices and management to address those resource concerns and improve the quality of the pasture. EQIP helps cover a portion of the cost to install these practices. So far, 691.59 acres of the Tinian lease back land is under a NRCS conservation plan. This represents a total of over \$514,260 of financial assistance for Tinian ranchers.



*DOD Lease Back Rancher – Palacios – surrounded by his beef cattle near his watering facility.*



*DOD Lease Back Rancher – Aquiningoc – wears NRCS hat presented for completing 1 of 2 EQIP Contracts. Photo taken on leased land pasture near corral area.*

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Angel Figueroa, Director

*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

Greetings PIA Family! I have great news on the support that the State Office is providing the Field Office system in order to serve our customers in the Pacific Islands Area. I will list accomplishments in the areas of Resource Technology, Soil Science, and Engineering.

The Resource Technology Team has accomplished the following toward the PIA Conservation priority – Developed the FY14 Do Not Implement spreadsheet that allows contracts to be obligated yet ensures non-implementation until concurrences are received; Initiated new multi-disciplinary Conservation Planner Certification review process that dramatically reduces review times; Updated 16 Conservation Practice Standards; Streamlined twelve Conservation Practice Jobsheets; Replaced Quality Criteria with Planning Criteria which then led to a new streamlined PIA Resource Concern Checklist to replace the more cumbersome Conservation Planning Technical Note #1; Added new “Resource Concerns Information” section to the PIA Website, Technical Resources page under the Conservation Planning bullet to help understand the new resource concerns; Developed 91 practice payment schedules for the Practice Payment Schedule (PPS) process for fiscal year 2013; Submitted significant FY13 feedback to the National Payment Schedule team in preparation for the FY14 Program Payment Schedule scenario building process; Released new Biology Technical Note #23 on the Pacific Islands Area Wildlife Habitat Assessment tool; Revised seven and added four new Conservation Activity Plans; Updated the PIA Conservation Planning Physical Effects spreadsheet; Revised Plant Materials Technical Note #7, the PIA Vegetative Guide and is now streamlining this tool into an Excel spreadsheet.

Our Soil Science and Natural Resource Assessments (SSNRA) Team has participated in several significant projects to support conservation planning in the PIA. In response to the national Soil Health Initiative, they measured critical soil properties indicative of healthy soils and provided these tools to our conservation planners. They delivered soil compaction testers to the Hawaii field offices to help evaluate a wide-scale soil resource concern in the islands because of past sugar cane production practices. The PIA SSNRA team has provided technical soil services to over 100 internal and external customers this past winter. Technical soil services were provided to all customer requests vary from delivering soils information pertaining to agriculture in the Marshall Islands, assisting the Puna soil and water conservation district in their conservation awareness contest, serving on the Oahu Important Agricultural Land Technical advisory committee, outdoor education to Waimea Middle School, developing difficult fence installation criteria for EQIP and working with a University of Hawaii graduate student on a phosphorus loading project. The National Resource Inventory (NRI) team collected data for over 200 points in Hawaii to provide a snapshot of trends in resource condition to help develop and refine conservation policy and programs. Our team has worked with the National Geospatial Management Center to acquire the latest high resolution imagery and elevation data to benefit our conservation planning efforts. Team staff in Kealahou Soil Survey Office have been working on the Rapid Carbon Assessment Project (please see the feature story in this newsletter) to collect valuable information on soil carbon stocks in soils of the Hawaiian Islands. The SSNRA Team has worked with our universities, local, state and federal agencies, Department of Defense - Pacific Command, congressional representatives and foreign dignitaries to inform them about soil health and recent developments in NRCS Soil Survey technology and information, including the new SoilWeb app release for Smartphones and a Spanish version of soil map unit descriptions on Web Soil Survey.

At long last we have produced a new Engineering Job Approval Authority chart to cover all of PIA. This will soon be issued as the first PIA supplement to the National Engineering Manual. Work is ongoing to produce two EWP Emergency Recovery Plans, one each for PIA East and West. We compiled all information on HI project dams, developed GIS shapefiles, and uploaded it all into the new NRCS DamWatch program. We enlisted assistance from the West National Tech Center to investigate and produce an alternatives assessment for Wahikuli Gulch (Maui) as a contribution to the ACOE Ridge to Reef initiative. Phase III of the Kagman Watershed Project has been completed and closed out.

I hope everyone has had a great winter season and please understand that our NRCS Team has three priorities: Conservation (planning, application, follow up); Civil Rights (program delivery, EEO, Diversity); and Getting our House in Order (program reviews, audit readiness, proper contract management). Have a great summer.

# In Loving Memory of U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye

In December 2012, we mourned the loss of U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye. For many years, our agency benefited from the support of the late Senator and his staff. These are a few of the projects that he influenced.

## Kahoolawe Island Restoration:

Provided funding to the NRCS Hawaii Plant Materials Center to produce large quantities of native plant seeds for the Kahoolawe Island Reserve Commission. The native seeds were used to re-vegetate Kahoolawe and provided benefits such as reduced erosion and sedimentation, improved watersheds and coastal marine habitat, the protection of archeological sites, and provided culturally significant plantings. The earmark also enabled the Plant Materials Center to work with the University of Hawaii to publish technical documents regarding native plant establishment and propagation.

## Natural Farming Projects:

Provided Natural Farming project grants to local farmers to demonstrate the Natural Farming system on agricultural lands. Grants provided on the islands of Maui, Molokai, Kauai, and Oahu.

## Agricultural Development Projects:

Provided grants to small farmers and local entrepreneurs to build agricultural businesses that would benefit the community and the economy. Grants provided on the islands of Maui, Molokai, Kauai, and Oahu.

## Lower Hamakua:

Will provide agricultural water to diversified farmers through repair and restoration of the Lower Hamakua Ditch, originally constructed in 1910.

## Upcountry Maui:

Is improving agricultural water supply to small farmers of Upper Kula, Maui through installation of a dedicated ag water distribution system bypassing the domestic water treatment plant.

## Wailuku-Alenaio:

Will provide 100-year level of flood protection to northern parts of Hilo, completing unconstructed elements from the 1976 Watershed Work Plan.

## Lahaina Watershed:

Will provide 100-year level of flood protection to southern part of Lahaina town and reduce the amount of sediment discharged to the ocean.

## Watershed Planning Staff:

Targeted efforts to better manage Hawaii watersheds and their resources by providing Technical Assistance for watershed planning projects.



Honorable Daniel Inouye  
September 7, 1924 - December 17, 2012



Jolene Lau, the late U.S. Senator Inouye, and Glenn Sakamoto at the Plant Materials Center.

*"I met the late Senator with Tony and Shirley two months before he passed. He spoke to me in Spanish and pronounced my name perfectly.*

*Also, he said that "I don't allow my name on big public works because I don't want my personality to detract from the value of the project". What a concept!*

*--Angel Figueroa, Director*

# Employee Spotlight



**Morri-Ann Nagata**  
Lihue Soil Conservationist

I was born and raised in a farming community surrounded by coffee and macadamia on the Big Island of Hawaii. In 2005, I received the Asian Pacific Islanders Organization Scholarship and proceeded to attend the University of Hawaii at Hilo and graduated with honors with a Bachelors of Science in General Agriculture.

My career started as a summer intern in the Kealakekua Field Office, Hawaii; Livermore, California at the Alameda County Conservation Partnership Office; and the O’Neil Field Office, Nebraska. During the internships I was exposed to a wide variety of conservation efforts that NRCS works with.

As an intern at Kealakekua, I was able to shadow staff. I learned about forming conservation plans, mapping soils and differences in ecology as well as develop a greater knowledge of native plants.

In Livermore, at the Alameda County Conservation Partnership Office, I worked alongside engineering, biology, range, contracting, management and outreach staff. Projects varied greatly from working with livestock producers to restoring old livestock ponds as native amphibian habitats, to doing annual photo plots on a stream corridor restoration project demonstrating the use of bioengineering techniques in a semi- urban stream setting and planning native hedge rows for a local agricultural park. We also did hands-on watershed education at a local elementary school expressing the importance of watersheds, demonstrating point and non-point source pollution. Many of these projects demonstrated the far reaching accomplishments of working with multiple partners.

At the Oneill Field Office in Nebraska I got to see agricultural cropping, ranching and feedlots on a large scale. Common crops were corn, soy beans, potatoes and tomatoes and the most common livestock was cattle. During my time there I was introduced to no-till corn and soy, the process of seed cleaning and storage, mapping farmed wetlands, checking out practices such as pipeline and cross fencing on large scale, pivot systems, flood irrigation and open ditch water delivery systems from a main aquifer (Ogallala).

I started working full time at the Lihue Field Office on Kauai in 2009. It’s been a joy working with the local community and field office staff here. As we all know the agricultural products vary widely here in the Pacific Islands Area. This keeps things interesting; never knowing what will be seen in the field, such as a rare native plant/animal, exotic fruit/vegetable, different breed of livestock or a culturally significant site. It’s a constant surprise and provides a never ending learning experience.

I am very thankful for the many opportunities that NRCS has allowed me. The internship experience in multiple states alone is invaluable, giving me a broadened perspective of agriculture production and conservation efforts in very different areas while creating many new friends.

# Helping Herman in Waimea

by Carolyn Wong, Waimea Resource Conservationist

Herman Holland is a third generation rancher on Hawaiian Homelands in Waimea, Hawaii. He manages a cow-calf operation on 300 acres. He heard about EQIP from other EQIP participants in the community and sought help to be a better steward of the family ranch. As the land had been in his family for generations, much of the original infrastructure was aged and ineffective. Fireweed, carpet grass, dandelion and other undesirables had been increasing over the years and it seemed like he had less and less grass. He wanted to be able to practice rotational grazing, but the cost for all the improvements necessary made it unfeasible. His first EQIP contract helped him to install cross-fencing, a few new water troughs and adopt prescribed grazing so that he could begin better managing his grass. With his second contract, he is addressing soil erosion concerns at severely deteriorated old trough sites and establishing a native tree stand to enhance wildlife habitat.



## In Loving Memory

Eddie Perreira began working with the Soil Conservation Service in 1962 when the Plant Materials Center (PMC) was located in Kahului. When the PMC moved to Molokai in 1972, he joined the SCS Wailuku Field Office as a Soil Conservation Technician and worked until the end of 1990. Eddie's best SCS experience was working in the Pacific Island field offices (Guam, Saipan, and the Mariana Islands) where he felt "free" to develop much needed conservation plans without supervision. He then retired to his 1/2 acre commercial nursery which specialized in rare tropical plants in Haiku. Eddie served on the Olinda-Kula SWCD board as an associate director for 20 years, and 12 years as a member of the Farm Service Agency County Committee. If anyone ever needed something, we could always count on Eddie to lend a helping hand.



Edward Pico Perreira Sr.  
Feb. 27, 1927—Jan. 20, 2013



Robert W. Lani  
Mar. 14, 1949—January 30, 2013

Bobby Lani joined the NRCS Wailuku field office staff as a soil conservationist in January 1997 after working ten years for the Plant Material Center (PMC) on the island of Molokai. He worked as an intermittent gardener for the PMC while attending Maui Community College, and earned an A.S. Degree in Agriculture. Bob then became the PMC Biological Technician responsible for the operations, maintenance, and green propagation of various plants for conservation practices. He was very creative in designing irrigation systems and reservoirs. "His three-dimensional hand drawings of reservoirs and irrigation designs were quite amazing," said District Conservationist Ranae Gansker-Cerizo. Bobby earned seven extra effort spot awards for his excellent work. At the end of the day, Bobby's favorite saying was, "Aloha, try again tomorrow."

# Personnel Update

## Incoming:

Alicia Greene, Civil Engineer, Hilo  
Donna Hopwood, Asst Dir for Field Operations, Aiea  
Preston Irwin, Range Mgmt. Specialist, Waimea  
Robin Kelley, State Administrative Officer, State Office  
Arlene Rosenkrans, Resource Conservationist, Pohnpei  
Roxane Torres, Admin Assistant, Aiea Area Office  
Ben Vinhateiro, District Conservationist, Lihue

## Outgoing:

Michael Brady, Resource Conservationist, transfer to CO  
Phillip Cherry, transfer to National Technology Center  
Katy Greene, Civil Engineer, transfer to FL  
Keith Harada, State Administrative Officer, retirement  
Michael Hayama, Engineer, retirement  
Gail Ichikawa, Management Analyst, retirement  
Michael Ingenluyff, transfer to Hawaii National Guard  
Bob Joy, Plant Materials Specialist, retirement  
Bobette Parsons, Soil Conservationist, transfer to CA  
Justin "Buddy" Perry, Soil Conservationist, retirement  
Pat Shade, GIS Specialist, retirement  
Gary Shimizu, Procurement Agent, retirement  
Bobby Vandivort, Civil Eng Technician, retirement



*Pictured left to right: Preston Irwin (NRCS State Rangeland Management Specialist), Jamie Dowsett, and his wife Queenie.*

## Cherry Blossom Festival

*by Matthew Wung, District Conservationist, Waimea*

The Mauna Kea Soil and Water Conservation District in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service put up a display for the Paniolo Preservation Society and informational booth at the Pukalani Stables during the recent Cherry Blossom Festival in Waimea on February 2, 2013. There were over 2500 attendees at the cultural festival. The display for the Paniolo Preservation Society included photos of past conservation practices, old time ranchers and farmers, and past agricultural activities.



*Director Angel Figueroa with Jamie Dowsett.*

## Service Recognition

Length of Service – 5 years:  
Pele Iuta, Cynthia Stiles, and Joseph Tuquero.

Length of Service – 10 years:  
Cameron Delligatti, Jay Doronila, Nicholas Gallo, Laila Jayyousi, Cheryl Lambert, Bernard Schmidt, Jessica Sternfels, and Antonette Tornito.

Length of Service – 20 years:  
Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Kevin Kinvig, John Lawrence, Lester Suehiro, James Sutter, and Sam Taylor.

Length of Service – 25 years:  
Michael Ingenluyff.

*"Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt, to offer a solution everybody can understand."*

*--Former Secretary of State Colin Powell*

## Matt Bull

*Excerpts from the Rehab Hospital newsletter*

It was December 2010. The holiday season was in full swing at REHAB as Christmas carolers roamed the halls spreading holiday cheer. Amongst the crowd of patients, a young man stood out. Eager to be a part of the festivities, he found a hand drum and joined in with the carolers. He sat in his wheelchair belting out the Christmas songs; seemingly without a care in the world. It was a refreshing disposition for a patient who had to spend his holidays in a hospital. This positive attitude is what helped Matthew Bull overcome one of the most difficult challenges in his life.

Just one month earlier, Matt was a typical 26 year old with the world at his fingertips. He worked hard as a cook and enjoyed hanging out with his friends. He was also expecting the birth of his son in a few weeks time. On November 25, 2010, his world turned upside down. Matt decided to do a leisurely Thanksgiving Day hike with friends on the Makapuu Lighthouse trail. They veered off the paved path to take a "short-cut." In a moment of bad judgment, Matt found himself lying on the ground unable to move after falling approximately 20 feet down the side of a ledge. He landed feet first from the fall. But the impact was too much for his body.

He did not realize the seriousness of his injury until the paramedics tried to move him. All he could feel were shooting pains throughout his body. He had crushed part of his vertebrae and the doctors told him that he was paralyzed due to an incomplete spinal cord injury. Most people would fall into a depression after hearing that type of news, but not Matt. He was still hopeful that he would walk again.

After a brief stint at Queen's Medical Center and surgery on his spinal cord, Matt regained some feeling in his legs but still needed a wheelchair to get around. He was admitted to REHAB where he spent the next six weeks. In the last two weeks of his stay, the therapist got Matt standing again for the first time since his accident. He was completely speechless. Rare for anyone that knows him.

"I don't know where I would be today without REHAB and the staff. The therapists were great. They pushed me even more than I thought I could handle, but it was good." The progress that Matt made was inspiring. When he was first admitted Matt was completely dependent on his wheelchair and now he is walking around with the minimal assistance



*Michael W. Perry and Matthew Bull  
with a donation from the Harry & Jeanette  
Weinberg Foundation to the  
Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific.*

of a cane. He is back to work and has transitioned into a steady administrative position. There are many things that Matt and his family have to celebrate this holiday season, including his son's second birthday which just happens to fall on Christmas Eve.

Matt would not have been able to come to REHAB without financial assistance from hospital donors. Thanks to the generous support from people like you in the community, REHAB can continue to help more patients and families like Matt's regain their independence.

*May is Asian Pacific*

*Heritage Month*



## Hoolehua People's Garden

by Glenn Sakamoto, Plant Materials Center Manager

Since October 2012, volunteers harvested 4,685 pounds of fresh produce that was donated to local charities on the island of Molo-kai. The Hoolehua People's Garden currently grows eggplant, taro, and tomato. Thank you to everyone that helped to make this successful!

*Pictured left to right: Kaleo, Jake, Brandon, Marcus, and Siri at the Hoolehua People's Garden.*



## 2013 Earth Team Award

by Kendal Hicks, Saipan District Conservationist

30 students from the Northern Marianas College's Environmental and Natural Resources Organization won the national Earth Team Award. The award recognized the 150th Anniversary of the USDA tree planting and weed removal, in spite of torrential rainfall. Congratulations and keep up the great work team!

## Rapid Carbon Assessment

by Cynthia Stiles, Assistant State Soil Scientist

The carbon stocks of Hawaii soils are being evaluated in FY 2013. Hawaii and Alaska are the last two states in the US to collect soil carbon data for USDA-NRCS sponsored Rapid Carbon Assessment (RaCA). Soil scientists Mike Kolman and Amy Koch from the USDA-NRCS Kealakekua Soil Survey Office, along with Michelle Lazaro from the University of Hawaii-Manoa, are the primary team members working this summer on soil sampling. They are being trained in RaCA methods this week by Kari Sever, a soil scientist and RaCA Coordinator from Ft. Collins, Colorado, MLRA Soil Survey Office. Support for Ms. Lazaro and for Dr. Susan Crow, also at UH-Manoa, to help with collection and processing of the many samples is being provided by an agreement through the Conservation Ecosystem Studies Unit Network. Funding for travel and logistics for the sampling personnel is provided by the National Soil Survey Center (NSSC) in Lincoln, NE. Soils will be sampled from at least 50 locations distributed across the Hawaiian Islands, using special sampling protocols provided by the NSSC. The samples are returned to UH-Manoa for further processing and analysis and the data will be incorporated into summary tables that will be provided to Soil Survey Offices and other users. It is anticipated that these data will be incorporated into the national soils database for use in conservation planning, particularly to inform effects of conservation practices on soil carbon stocks for global carbon accounting as well as addressing soil condition resource concerns.



*Pictured left to right: UH's Michelle Lazaro, volunteer Alex Beaton, Amy Koch, and Mike Kolman on Hawaii Island. Photo by Kari Sever.*

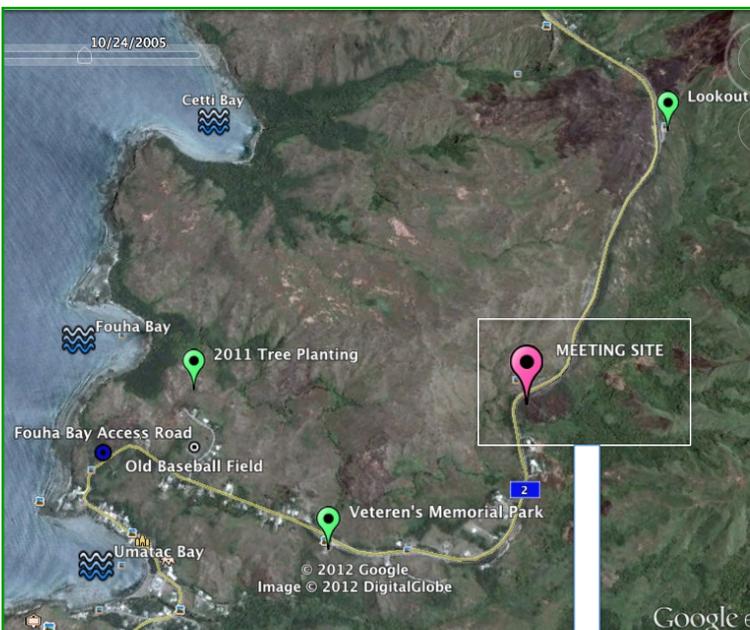
# Humatak Watershed Adventure

by Bart Lawrence, Assistant Director for Field Operations -West

NRCS West Area staff and Earth Team Volunteers participated in a Southern Guam community watershed event to address the problem of soil erosion. This effort is in partnership with local Government of Guam (Guam Forestry and Guam Environmental Protection Agency), many non-government agencies and the Southern Guam Soil and Water Conservation District. This partnership is also helping to increase the awareness of NRCS conservation programs and technical services with local partners and the next generation of Guam resource managers. One important partner is Austin Shelton, a PhD candidate at the University of Hawaii. Austin is studying the impact of sediment pollution in Fouha Bay. Austin's doctoral research focuses on land based treatments within a small watershed in southern Guam, La Sa F'ou. He is doing important research work to increase awareness about the impacts of unmanaged storm water and sedimentation pollution on southern Guam uplands and coral reefs. Using various social media tools, Austin has organized an outstanding network of community volunteers to conduct clean ups, tree planting and other natural resource working tour events. His and the efforts of many volunteers has resulted in important treatment of degraded lands in the La Sa F'ou watershed. His research and use of bio-socks, tubs filled with chipped wood mulch, is a low cost and effective technology to trap sediment. The mulch for the bio-socks was generated by a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant project with the University of Guam.



*George Washington High School group lining out to plant trees. Over 45 volunteers hiked over two miles to the project site. Families, school groups, business groups, and University of Guam Green Army interns all helped to make the event a success. Images (right) are from a GovGuam tree planting event in October 2012 led by Guam Forestry and Guam EPA.*



*Humatak and Ugum-Atate project area map. Note the large fire scar around the "lookout" in the Upper Cetti Bay Watershed.*



*Joe Mafnas (left), Guam State Forester and John Lawrence (right), USDA-NRCS Assistant Director West Area office enjoying the fresh papaya slices for the tree planters provided by the Southern Guam Soil and Water Conservation District.*