

## Recovery Act for Kagman

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the USDA will be sending \$84.8 million to state and local governments to improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat in rural communities as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Of that, \$4,150,000 will be used for the Kagman Watershed Project, Island of Saipan, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Kagman Watershed Project consists of four waterways, two sediment basins, a 70-million gallon reservoir, a 100,000-gallon storage tank, and an irrigation water delivery system.

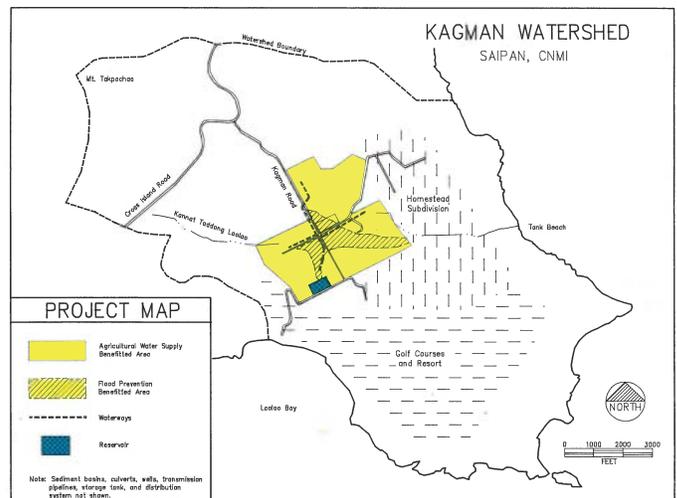
Completion of the final phases of this watershed project will contribute importantly to the economic growth of the area. The project provides flood protection, protects three endangered species, and preserves prime farm land with historically underserved cooperators.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the national's infrastructure, jumpstart the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, and restore wetlands.

The watershed is a 3,750-acre peninsula on the eastern shore of Saipan and is the largest watershed project in the Pacific Basin. Flood protection to several critical roads and ag land is a primary benefit from the surface water management features on the plan.

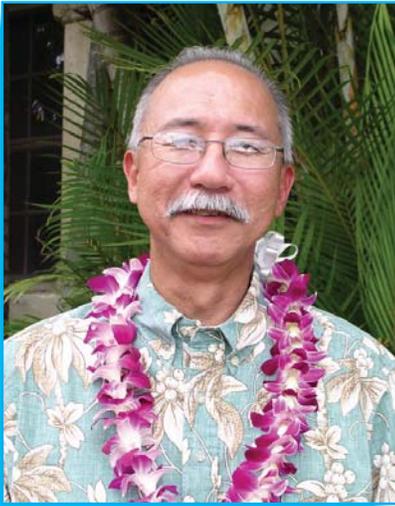


*Photo of a waterway that was done in an earlier phase of the Kagman Watershed Project.*



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Lawrence T. Yamamoto, PIA Director

# Message from the PIA Director

As someone involved in the work of natural resource conservation, I am amazed at how things continue to change over the last few years. As you have come to realize, we are now in a new era. We have a new Chief for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. We have been challenged to implement the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The new head of the NRCS, Chief Dave White set three strategic goals. They are:

- To implement the new farm bill in harmony with the President’s agenda and in harmony with our conservation core values.
- To put our house in order at every level of the organization.
- To create a climate in which NRCS can succeed.

As members of the NRCS family and as part of the Conservation Partnership, we need to work diligently to meet these goals.

As part of meeting the Chief’s first goal, we need to remember that our priorities are:

### 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

In addition, and as part of the President’s agenda, we also need to ensure that we deliver the projects that were funded by the ARRA. For the Pacific Islands Area that will be the Kagman Watershed project on Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The second of the Chief’s goal is to put the NRCS house in order at every level of the organization. He believes that “our agency was founded to provide conservation planning and technical assistance to America’s landowners and our reputation has been based on our skill in those areas. If we want to retain that expertise, we must restore our scientific standing.”

Finally, the Chief’s third goal is to create a climate in which NRCS can succeed. This includes working closely with Congress, the Department, other federal entities and our historic partners, as well as forging new alliances.

The Chief has emphasized Hugh Hammond Bennett’s vision of locally led conservation and our legacy. Let’s work to insure that we meet these goals. Let’s focus on “Helping People Help the Land.”

Lawrence T. Yamamoto, Director

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

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# Earth Day with Earth Team Volunteers



by Gregory Koob

## Cleaning Kawaihau

by Gregory Koob, PIA State Biologist, Honolulu, HI

NRCS owns a WRP easement in Kapaa on Kauai known as Kawaihau. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is partnering with us on the management of the site and together we have partnered with the Hawaii Nature Center to coordinate volunteer days on the WRP easement. Pauline Kawamoto, the Volunteer Program Manager for the Hawaii Nature Center organized two volunteer days, the first on March 21, 2009, and the second on May 2, 2009. Adonia Henry and Michelle Clark of USFWS and Lex Riggle, the Lihue Service Center district conservationist also participated.

High school students in the Kamehameha Schools Scholarship program on Kauai and the Kauai High School Nature Club helped clear up weeds in the recently restored wetlands at Kawaihau. We used the opportunity to talk about wetland ecology, wetland birds and plants, and work safety before tackling the weeds. NRCS produced a plant guide for the more common species in the wetland so the students could identify the good guys (native plant species) from the bad guys (non native weeds). The students along with their teachers (and one teacher's two daughters) pulled Indian flea-bane and pickleweed from around one of the wetland basins, helping us get a good start on keeping the weeds under control in this wildlife habitat.

One group of students got to see a nest and eggs of the Hawaiian Stilt (Aeo) while they were clearing mangrove seedlings from another portion of the wetland. The Aeo is an endangered species so we quickly left the area but the students got to see something few people have the privilege of seeing.



*Pictured (L-R): Sharon Sawdey and Jolene Lau in Honolulu. Missing Gregory Koob, another dedicated volunteer (taking the photo)!*

**In Celebration of National Volunteer Week in April, we proudly thank the 87 valuable individuals that volunteered a total of 4,441 hours! Together we are making a difference in the Pacific Islands Area.**



*Pictured (L-R): Kawika Duvauchelle, Wally Jennings, Keni Reyes, Debra Kelly, Charity Dudoit, and Jessica Ludgate in Hoolehua. Missing from photo: Morgan Puaa.*

# Employee Spotlight



*Working as a Soil Conservationist on steep slopes in American Samoa.*



*With my sister, dad, and nephew (above).  
With my grandma on her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday (below).*



Aloha and Talofa! My name is Sarah Tanuvasa and I am currently a Soil Conservationist in the American Samoa Field office. Wow! It's been an amazing two years since I arrived on Island. From the type of field work, to the many different projects, starting a new career, and meeting my father's side of the family for the first time, one can say that yes, a new chapter has started.

I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. My mom is Hawaiian, Filipino, and my dad is Samoan, born and raised in American Samoa. I started with NRCS in the summer of 2005, when I was awarded the APIO Pilot scholarship. I received a full scholarship and interned one summer at the Hilo field office and one summer at the Maui field office. After graduating from the University of Hawaii at Hilo with my Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Agroecology and Environmental Quality) I was on the plane heading over to American Samoa. To be honest, I was not scared or did not know what to expect, I was just ready to do something new and meet my family.

Through these two years I have been blessed to start off at such a remarkable field office. The training, patience and support from everyone I have worked with past and present, have really been helpful in my transition into my new life and career. I have learned a lot in every aspect of life while being here. Words can't express my gratitude to everyone who has helped, and trained me in every possible way.

Everyone has been working hard, and we have all been able to get a dramatic increase in our EQIP applications and contracts, dealing primarily with soil erosion on steep hills and animal waste systems. Like everywhere else, there are many challenges, therefore leading us to approach it from another direction. Outreach and encouragement to volunteers to help us translate documents and narratives, conduct field work, and outreach from recent years have been key elements in helping us achieve our goals. But through this, I have realized that outreach not only to our farmers, but to our younger generations, is critical in the conservation of our natural resources.

Before I go on, I'll just get down to the bottom line, and say I love what NRCS does for the people and the land. I am honored to be a part of this family. I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to finish school, be able to learn about my heritage, and most of all be able to help my people conserve our natural resources here in American Samoa. Soifua!

## National Civil Rights Committee Membership Opportunities



by Pam Sablan-Aguon, Soil Conservationist, Saipan

My time with the National Civil Rights Committee as the Asian/Pacific Islander Female Representative has come to a close. I must step down because my term expires at the end of this Fiscal Year (2009). While serving as a member on this committee, I have gained a wealth of experience working with the most diversified committee in NRCS family. The committee is made up of male and female representatives of the following groups: American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian/Pacific Islander; Black; Hispanic; People with Disabilities; and White. The committee is lead by the National Civil Rights Committee Chairperson, along with the Chair's Assistant and Advisors (Civil Rights Division Director; Outreach Division Director; Human Resources Division Director; and Strategic Planning and Program Division).

NCRC's mission is to provide counsel and recommendations to the Chief on Civil Rights issues and concerns of employees and clients. The committee's vision is to be recognized as a guiding force, which strives for excellence in Civil Rights for all clients and employees of NRCS. Please consider this mission and vision of NCRC when responding to these vacancies. Committee members should be self-starters who are willing to volunteer to complete actions identified in the NCRC business plan. The business plan and bylaws are located on NRCS' Intranet web site at <https://my.nrcs.usda.gov/nrcs.aspx>, in the NCRC folder. NCRC meets three times a year and the travel expenses are covered by National Headquarters. Line officers must concur in the nomination and agree to support the employee by granting up to 20 percent of their time for NCRC travel and work activities.

Keep a look out for the National Bulletin Announcement for the upcoming vacancies. There will be four vacancies by end of Fiscal Year 2009. Those positions include: Asian/Pacific Islander Female; American Indian/Alaskan Native Female; Hispanic Male; and Hispanic Female.

In closure, I challenge all Asian/Pacific Islander Females of all grades, series, and geographic locations to submit their nomination forms to the National Civil Rights Committee and take up the challenge to make a difference for the people we work with and the people we serve. Its is a great opportunity and well worth your 20% collateral duty.

## Focus on the Field: CNMI

by Pam Sablan-Aguon, Soil Conservationist, Saipan

The Saipan Field Office welcomes our newest staff on-board, Mr. James Eller. Mr. Eller and his wife arrived in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. He will be working with the Saipan Field Office staff to provide technical and programs assistance to the CNMI. Working in the CNMI brings a new set of challenges; diverse cultures, operations, conservation practices, attitudes, and unique resource concerns for each of the islands. Please help us in wishing James and his wife a warm Hafa Adai and welcome to the islands – West-Side PIA.

### **NRCS Outreach Efforts in the CNMI 2009 Ag Summit**

The USDA NRCS Saipan Field Office was invited to attend the 2009 CNMI Agricultural Summit as experts on NRCS Programs and Services. The message was targeted to local CNMI farmers and ranchers. The event was held at the Saipan World Resort from February 11-12, 2009. This summit was organized by the CNMI Farmers Support Group and sponsored by various agencies.

Jay Doronila, Soil Conservationist with the Saipan Field Office, was sent as the Field Office Representative and participated as a panel member for the Government Agencies during the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Ag Summit. Along with him, the panel consisted of FSA, APHIS, NMC-CREES and CDA. Jay presented to approximately 60 farmers and ranchers in attendance. The conference was also Satellite Broadcasted to the islands of Rota and Tinian. He started out his presentation by informing the attendees of Pacific Islands Area of coverage, geographically and how each government office works with each other to implement conservation practices. Continuing on, he presented on the availability of Conservation Technical Assistance services. Furthermore, he spoke of Programs available to farmers, ranchers and other private landowners. Pam Aguon, Acting D.C. later joined him during the Individual Consultation sessions. Attendees commented on Jay's exceptional presentation. Current Program Participants that were present during the Ag Summit were also involved in speaking with other individuals about NRCS Programs and their involvement and experiences with NRCS. Several agricultural producers mentioned that they were referring individuals to the NRCS Saipan Field Office.

With the recent outreach efforts and growing interest in conservation, the NRCS Saipan Field Office is looking forward to working with new customers. The NRCS is committed to helping islanders help the islands.



Back Row: Andres Juario Jr., Keni Reyes, and Bob Joy.  
Front Row: Glenn Sakamoto and Kawika Duvauchelle.

# Personnel Update

## Incoming:

Stephen Case, Contract Officer, State Office  
Mark Defley, Resource Conservation & Development Coordinator, Guam  
Kathleen Dobler, Deputy Director, State Office  
Rhonda Draper, Human Resources Specialist, State Office  
James Eller, District Conservationist, Saipan  
R. David Fischer, Civil Engineer, Kealakekua  
Theresa Navarro, STEP Office Assistant, State Office  
Carl Rossetti, Engineer Technician (Civil), Kealakekua

## Outgoing:

Charity Dudoit, resigned from Hoolehua  
Nathan Varns, transfer to Oregon  
Shirley Yamaguchi, Department of Defense, HI

## Spot Awards:

Ranae Ganske-Cerizo, Bob Gavenda, Reese Libby, Mike Robotham, Tony Rolfes, Patricia Shade, and Cheri Won.

Length of Service – 5 years: Richard Berscheid

Length of Service – 20 years: Philip “Kipp” Cherry

Length of Service – 30 years: Pat Shade

Time Off: Colleen Simpson

## Hoolehua PMC Awarded

Congratulations to the Hoolehua Plant Materials Center for their award-winning work! The award, “Certificate of Performance: Technical Document Preparation” was presented to our PMC for their outstanding performance preparing Scientific and Popular Documents in fiscal year 2008.

*99% of failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses.*  
~~George W. Carver

## Chief's Coin



Chief Arlen Lancaster Recognized the following PIA employees for their dedicated service and extraordinary commitment to completing the 2008 NRCS Audit Financial Review:

Jocelyn Bamba, David Clausnitzer, Jay Doronila, Keith Harada, Kori Hisashima, Shannon Hoehna, Gail Ichikawa, Tony Ingersoll, James Ino, Chad Kacir, Dennis Kimberlin, Greg Koob, Jolene Lau, Lori Metz, Hud Minschew, Shirley Nakamura, Lex Riggle, Tony Rolfes, Arlene Rosenkrans, Amy Saunders, Ben Schmidt, Colleen Simpson, Leo Smock-Randall, Patra Vidondo, and Cheri Won. Congratulations and thank you for helping to make our files accurate, complete, and reliable!



## Working in Palau

My name is Dan Bloedel. For the past year I have had the privilege to serve as Resource Conservationist for the Palau Field Office. I started my NRCS journey as a Soil Conservationist in Chinook Montana in 1988 during the busy years of Conservation Compliance. The older conservationists once referred to those of us who started in those days as “FSA Babies” but that’s another story.

Along the trail I’ve had the privilege of working to conserve soil on dry and irrigated cropland, rangeland and pasturelands in the Western United States. I’ve provided technical assistance to land users over the years in several Field Offices. Once I even helped open a new Field Office. Now I’m working on forests and savannas on a small Pacific island nation. What a great job! It’s hard to believe that I get paid to be outside most of the time!

Every Field Office is tasked with many duties and Palau is no exception. We are challenged with such resource concerns as soil erosion, soil quality, water quality, plant condition, animal condition and coral reef health. As with other islands we are acutely aware of the profound ill effects of land degradation. Our challenge to protect soil, water and related resources is universal. Two aspects that make working in Palau special are the absence of programs, and the location of the Field Office.

Palau works 100% under the CTA authority. No EQIP, no WRP, no CSP, GRP, RC&D, WHIP, EWP or PL-566. When both the conservationist and the client are starting with the knowledge no money is available it’s a little different than starting from, “How do I sign up for this program”. Incentives for conservation in Palau have to be demonstrated on the ground in areas where conservation is most needed. This makes the selling of conservation critical. Because NRCS may or may not remain in Palau in perpetuity we always need to be thinking of how we can best transfer our working and operational knowledge to the Palauans.

The Palau Field Office is now located within the US Embassy. The Republic has a relationship with the US which is defined in the Compact of Free Association with the United States. It is not a Territory but rather an independent and sovereign country.

Because of this relationship the Field Office is part of a team of US Officials operating in Palau. Everything we do as a Field Office has a potential effect on US Foreign relations with the Republic of Palau. So in addition to coordinating our Field Office activities with the West Area Office in Guam and the Pacific Islands Area in Hawaii we have to work closely with the Charge’d Affaires of the United States in Palau to insure that we are promoting the same agenda and that we are synchronized with US Foreign Policy.

The Federated States of Micronesia Field Office located in Pohnpei is the only other NRCS Field Office located in a Foreign County. It’s been great working in Palau and my conservation journey continues.

## 2008 FEB Awardees



*Awardees from the 53rd Annual Excellence in Federal Government were recognized on May 6, 2009.*

In the latest step in an ongoing collaboration between the Administration and federal officials, Hawaii’s Lieutenant Governor James “Duke” Aiona Jr. helped recognize the hard work of employees from the highest level of government.

The recognition luncheon brought an estimated 1,100 people together at the Sheraton Hotel in Waikiki, where 235 federal government employees were honored for their accomplishments in the workplace.

Lt. Governor Aiona characterized the event organized by the Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board as an effective way for the federal government to help employees stay engaged, focused, and motivated. From NRCS, the recipients of this year’s award:

**Team Excellence** (Quality Assurance Audit Response Team):

Phil Cherry, David Clausnitzer, Barb Fossum, Shannon Hoehna, Bill Hollingsworth, Gail Ichikawa, Tony Ingersoll, Dennis Kimberlin, Greg Koob, Jolene Lau, Lori Metz, Karl Mikasa, Hud Minshew, Shirley Nakamura, Mike Robotham, Tony Rolfes, Amy Saunders, Sharon Sawdey, Ben Schmidt, Michael Whitt, and Denise Wiedenheft.

**Manager of the Year:** Jolene Lau

**Professional of the Year:** Elskin Allan

**Assistant of the Year:** Carl Hashimoto

**Mentor of the Year:** Cheryl Morton

# “Women Taking the Lead to Save our Planet”

by Colleen Simpson, PIA Federal Women’s Program Manager, Mongmong, GU

President Obama’s proclamation announcing March 2009 as Women’s History Month, recognized several notable women for their great achievements and efforts in preserving and protecting the environment:

**Ellen Swallow Richards** (1842-1911), was the first woman in the United States to be accepted at a scientific school, going on to become a prominent chemist and conducting a study that led to the Nation’s first state water-quality standards.

**Maria Sanford** (1836-1920), led the Minnesota Federation of Women’s Groups in their efforts to protect forestland near the Mississippi River, which eventually became the Chippewa National Forest, the first congressionally mandated national forest.

**Marjory Stoneman Douglas** (1890-1998), dedicated her life to protecting and restoring the Florida Everglades, her book, *The Everglades: Rivers of Grass*, published in 1947, led to the preservation of the Everglades as a National Park.

**Rachel Carson** (1907-1964), exposed the dangers of certain pesticides to the environment and to human health, her landmark 1962 book *Silent Spring* has emerged as a seminal work in environmental studies.

**Grace Thorpe** (1921-2008), another leading environmental advocate, in 1992, launched a successful campaign to organize Native Americans to oppose the storage of nuclear waste on their reservations, which she said contradicted Native American principles of stewardship of the earth, she also proposed that America invest in alternative energy sources such as hydroelectricity, solar, and wind power.

Honoring the past but looking to the present and into the future, who are the women today taking the lead to save our planet? Here are a few:

**Wangari Maathai** founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya in 1977, which has planted more than 10 million trees to prevent soil erosion and provide firewood for cooking fires. Her movement has made significant headway against Kenya’s deforestation. Wangari has been arrested and imprisoned numerous times for standing up for her beliefs, suffering injuries as well as being prevented from standing politically. In 2002, Wangari was finally elected to Parliament. She is also the first woman in central or eastern Africa to hold a Ph.D., the first woman head of a university department in Kenya, and the first African woman to win the Nobel Prize in Peace. Known as The Tree Lady, she is also a champion of Women’s rights. Excerpt from [http://www.wisewomen.me.uk/WISE WOMEN.html](http://www.wisewomen.me.uk/WISE_WOMEN.html)

**Bonnie Phillips** has been called an eco-nazi. She was a skilled, passionate mountain climber until she was 40 when a painful condition called fibromyalgia set in, limited her walking to a few yards, and turned her sharply focused energy toward forest activism. She joined the Audubon Society’s Pilchuk chapter, named for a mountain near Everett, WA, discovered a talent for tactics and alliances and soon became Pilchuk’s paid director. Recently she has prowled the halls of Congress, wheelchair and all, for the Forest Water Alliance, a consortium of 21 environmental groups. Excerpt from <http://www.time.com/time/reports/environment/heroes/heroessgallery/0,2967,phillips.00.html>

**Donna Wong** is an advocate, mentor and champion of land and water issues in Hawaii. Her advocacy journey began in 1980 when she ran and won election to the Kailua Neighborhood Board. She has served 12 terms and continues to work to empower people to have a voice in the future of their communities. In 1990 she became the Executive Director of Hawaii’s Thousand Friends and also uses that position to organized people throughout the state to be informed of and involved in the state and county land use, environmental and cultural protection laws and processes so they are prepared to participate in the governmental processes and fight for their local issues. She was recognized by the Hawaii State Commission on Status of Women as its 2009 Hawaii honoree for Women’s History Month. She is considered one of the most knowledgeable and staunchest defenders of Hawaii’s fragile environment in modern history. Excerpt from <http://www.examiner.com/x-6214-Honolulu-Neighborhood-Examiner~y2009m3d26-Donna-Wong--Woman-Environmentalist-of-the-Year> and Excerpt from <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/20090325/COMPUB07/90324077/1244>.



# Teaching Conservation Agriculture at Guam DOC

by Craig Smith, Agronomist, PIA-West, Mongmong, GU

The Guam Field Office and Marianas Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Guam (SWCD), are working with the Guam Department of Corrections to address serious resource issues at the prison farm, Mangilao, Guam. When Corporal Mesa with DEPCOR started managing the hillside Green Valley Farm, the 8 percent slopes were being repeatedly tilled from top to bottom resulting in massive soil loss and gullies. After seeking assistance from the Guam SWCD, SWCD contacted NRCS. Through this conservation partnership, Corporal Mesa has moved the farm to a progressive strip-tillage system of cross-slope contours where only 2 feet wide of soil is tilled between about 6 to 8 feet of permanent grass cover. Vegetable seedlings are greenhouse grown, and transplanted into the tilled strips about one month after germination. A green manure crop once called “Banana Field Pea” is being investigated at the Green Valley Farm to assess its conservation potential to address erosion, improve soil tilth and control pests (weeds and nematodes).

Banana Field Pea is a bushy variety of a cover crop (*Mucuna pruriens* var. *utilis*) which was grown on millions of acres in the southeast USA from 1890 to 1950. It was grown as cover crop, forage and for improving soil tilth.

The bushy variety of Banana Field Pea will be grown for a month or two in the narrow crop strips, then cut and slashed. Into this strip of enriched soils, various crops will be planted using the Banana Field Pea residue as mulch.

The inmates at the farm are learning skills that can help them work in crop and livestock farming after they serve their debts to society. Craig Smith, NRCS Agronomist, is teaching inmates how to increase and improve a rare handful of seed of this heirloom Green Manure crop. Thirty five plants were grown from one hundred seed. So far, three plants turned out to be the viny wild type and were destroyed (rogued out). Thirty two bushy plants were transplanted in mid-March 2009 and are now being grown as a seed increase planting. Only bushy plants were selected for this seed increase planting. If the seed crop is successful, the Farm will have a source of seed of a fast-growing, nematicidal, green manure crop to support on-site conservation farming to protect the soil and crops.

## Lessons learned:

- Inmates of Guam Department of Corrections are willing students of agriculture.
- Inmates are motivated early adopters of conservation farming techniques.
- Inmates practicing conservation farming techniques are learning a new life skill.
- There are many potential non-traditional conservation partners on Guam.



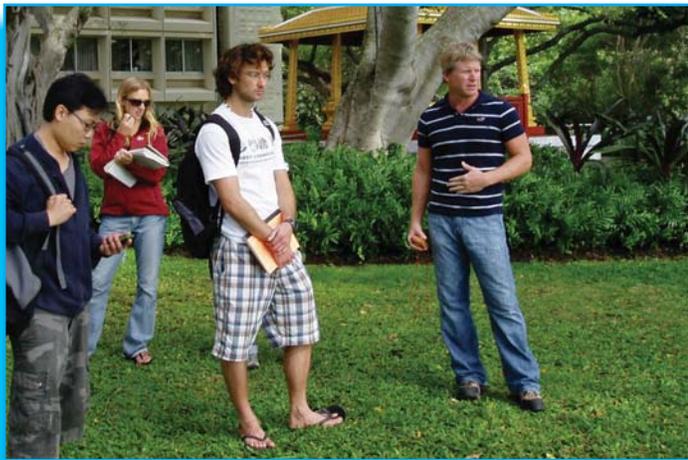
*Of the 35 plants of Banana Field Pea Plants germinated, so far only three plants were the Wild Viny Type. These were destroyed, or “rogued out.”*



*Antoinette Cruz (SWCD), Corporal Mesa (Department of Corrections), and Joanne Brown (SWCD Liaison).*



*Corporal Mesa (Dept. Corrections) and Craig Smith.*



## UH Students Explore NRCS Soil Erosion Prediction Model

by Philip Cherry, PIA State Agronomist, Honolulu, HI

The Watershed Hydrology Class at the University of Hawaii at Manoa has recently been exploring different Computer Program Models that relate to their course. On March 26<sup>th</sup> the class collected field data to use back in the classroom for predicting soil erosion by water. The Tool used for modeling the field situations was The Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2). The NRCS Hawaii State Agronomist was asked to demonstrate the model and help the Students collect data in the field. It was explained that RUSLE2 is used to show a before and after scenario. NRCS uses the tool to show the erosion damage before installing Conservation Practices and to show the improvement after Conservation Practices are established on the land. These Conservation Practices improve Water Quality, Soil Quality and Wildlife Habitat when implemented. The Tool helps NRCS employees know which practices are best suited for the many diverse land uses across the Nation. Many of the Students showed interest in a future career in Conservation and specifically with NRCS. *(Philip is pictured in the top photo at right.)*



Science Teacher Matt Hughes (left) with students from Kanu o ka Aina during the Science Fair in Waimea, HI.

## Kanu o ka Aina Science Fair

by Reese Libby, PIA East GIS Specialist, Waimea, HI

This year science fair for Kanu o ka Aina public charter school was presented at the new campus in Waimea. Kanu o ka Aina's Science Fair projects are a result of research conducted by the students in the environment as part of the science component of their projects. All projects integrate the concept of "sustainability" and solve authentic community issues, like eradicating apple snails from Waipio taro or using local products to make natural soap. Projects range from exploring invasive plant or animal eradications using natural methods, to studying the economics of buying local, from measuring coral reef health to designing effective waste water treatment systems.

The judges for the science fair are all from the community and there were three volunteers from the Waimea NRCS field office. The judges were John Pipen (district-conservationist from MKSWCD), Pete Hendricks (associate-director for MKSWCD) and Reese Libby (Geographer-NRCS-Waimea office).

This year's fair was very well organized and each judge was assigned a group of projects with the same theme. Most of the presentations were very well done and the students are a lot more organized and focused on their projects. I have attached some photos with some of the more popular science projects.

Kauhale Oiwi O Puukapu will be the permanent home for the Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana and its pioneering culturally driven programs. Ranging from early childhood to post-secondary education, these programs feature viable choices in education, including Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter School, acknowledged statewide as a leader in K-12 Hawaiian-focused education.

The commitment to community sustainability is both ancient and modern, grounded in traditional cultural values, at the same time aligned with 21st century global mindsets. Moreover, the approach utilized to achieve sustainability are also traditional and contemporary, local and global. This includes honoring the traditional and contemporary kuleana (privilege and responsibility) to maintain and protect Hawaii's precious resources, utilizing both ancestral expertise and modern technology. The Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to grow womb-to-tomb models of education that advance Hawaiian culture for a sustainable Hawaii. Their website is <http://kanu.kalo.org/>

# RC&D Corner: American Samoa

by Brian Peck, RC&D Coordinator

Now in its fourth year, the Tutuila Conservation Corps, aka “Jungle Busters”, completed another highly successful year. Ten AmeriCorps funded crew members conduct field activities, work at local government agencies, learn new skills, and obtain an award to continue with their education.

A highly invasive non-native tree known locally as “Tamaligi” (*Falcataria moluccana*) is rapidly spreading through the intact native forest ecosystem on the main island of Tutuila. Loss of native forest habitat negatively affects the rare Many-colored fruit doves and fruit bats that inhabit Tutuila’s forests. Tamaligi trees are shallow-rooted and grow to towering heights above the native rainforest canopy. It is easily blown down during storms, causing soil erosion that smothers fringing coral reefs. Members girdle the tree by stripping at least six feet of bark - the tree has the tenacious ability to re-grow bark over distances up to four feet! In 2008, the Jungle Busters team eradicated 121 acres of Tamaligi within the Pago Pago watershed on very steep terrain.

In addition, the members currently serve at seven governmental agencies several days per week, including one member at the NRCS Field Office. This is an excellent way for young people to prepare for careers in the natural resources management professions. Members learn crucial job skills, preparing them for the environmental challenges as the future leaders of the islands.

The American Samoa RC&D recently was awarded \$49,941 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and will be able to hire an additional three members for one year.

Mission: Promoting sustainable use of land and sea resources to provide for all generations of American Samoan people.

Vision: A people with skills, knowledge, resources, and desire to sustain themselves, now and in the future.



Photos by Teofilo Mageo

## Photo Contest Winners



Conservation category winner: Gregory Koob. A red-footed Booby chick on Kaneohe Marine Corps Base.



Scenic category winner: Leo Smock-Randall. Kanaha Pond Wetland Restoration.



Cultural category winner: Shane Sipiliano. Women weaving a fine mat in American Samoa.

Congratulations to Gregory Koob, Leo Smock-Randall, and Shane Sipiliano for being this round of photo contest winners! For the Conservation category, we had five nominations. For the Cultural category, we had five nominations, and for the Scenic category, we had three nominations. The Leadership Team judged the photos on Appropriateness to Category, Composition, Creativity, and Aesthetics.

The winner for the Conservation category is *Gregory Koob*, State Biologist in the Honolulu State Office. His picture is of a Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*) chick on Kaneohe Marine Corps Base, in its nest in a koa haole (*Leucaena leucocephala*) tree.

The winner for the Scenic category is *Leo Smock-Randall*, Soil Conservationist in the Kahului Field Office. His picture is of Kanaha Pond Wetland Restoration.

The winner for the Cultural category is *Shane Sipiliano*, Americorps volunteer in the American Samoa RC&D Office. His picture is of women weaving a fine mat in American Samoa.

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.

If you are interested in participating in the next contest, please email one JPEG or TIFF per category to [jolene.lau@hi.usda.gov](mailto:jolene.lau@hi.usda.gov). The deadline to submit photos for the next issue of *Current Developments* is due on July 31, 2009.

*The happiness of your life  
depends on the quality of your thoughts.*  
~~Marcus A. Antoninus