



## Cultural Resource Training

*By Matthew Wung, Kamuela District Conservationist*

NRCS staff and District employees on the Big Island of Hawaii had valuable cultural resources training earlier this year, lead by our own Cultural Resources Specialist, Valerie Russell.

We learned about the history of Hawaii, why cultural resources is important, what is a cultural resource, why NRCS needs to address cultural resources, what protocols to follow concerning cultural resources, and what process and documentation needs to be done in conservation planning and Farm Bill contracting procedures concerning cultural resources. The training consisted of a one-day classroom, one-day field, and half-day for the test and evaluation. The field day visits included a visit to an ancient Hawaiian fishing village; Lapakahi State Park where we saw various structures, platforms, enclosures, and plants used. We visited the Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site and to Vipassana Hawaii in North Kohala where we saw various Lohi's, an archeological dig, and a damaged Heiau. Everyone has had some experience with cultural resources and this training was one of the best trainings we had.



*Archeological dig at Vipassana Hawaii.*



*Lapakahi State park of a home site.*

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*Angel Figueroa, PIA Director*

## Message from the PIA Director

**G**reetings to all NRCS employees and partners in the Pacific Islands Area! I hope you are having a great field season helping our producers help the land. I am excited about the news in this issue of the Pacific Islands Current Developments. With renewed enthusiasm in implementing the Secretary's vision for Cultural Transformation I will ensure we observe all ethnic heritage months as that is one of my three priorities: Conservation; Civil Rights; Getting our House in Order. We have a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the American public that we care about each group represented in our society and that our workforce mirrors the rest of our population. This is my commitment. We do have a changing but vibrant Civil Rights Action Committee (CRAC) under the interim direction of our Assistant Director for Administration, Robin Kelley. Our challenge with the CRAC is to fill the voids for the Special Emphasis Program Manager positions in a way that will be creative and fit within the current budget situation. Our PIA workforce is now below 90 employees from a high of 110 two years ago. We may have to double up on emphasis programs per SEPM or take other measures to address this priority, while maintaining a reasonable level of service to our customers.

I have to thank the West Area Staff for making my latest trip a wonderful experience. I visited with many conservation-minded farmers and ranchers; re-emerging soil and water conservation districts; devoted NRCS and partners; and community and political leaders. I spent a good amount of time visiting with the Tinian Cattlemen's Association ranchers and attended a Saipan economic development summit. I was given many sizable tours of farming and ranching operations coupled with historic landmarks in that rich part of our world. I also had the opportunity to meet with conservation minded groups in Palau who want to preserve their diverse landscape and preserve their culture. Working in the West Area is very exciting and I could feel the energy and passion conveyed by the Western Pacific dwellers as they work on their conservation projects and activities. I also learned some cultural facts including how to spell betel nut.

In the East Area I had a great experience at the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Conference in Waimea. The SWCD was most accommodating and provided an excellent venue, food, speakers, and transportation. The topics on the agenda included opportunities for 319 grants, forestry issues, and conservation issues. Each SWCD conservation planner made a presentation about their work alongside NRCS staff helping people help the land. The speakers were very complementary of NRCS personnel and programs in line with our conservation objectives. The last afternoon we were taken on a tour of innovative farms that work with the Districts and NRCS, culminating in a beef barbeque at Kahua Ranch, with amazing views from a higher elevation and a great silent auction. Robin Kelley even auctioned a dinner with her, and all proceeds of the auction will pay for travel expenses for the Hawaii delegation to attend the Oklahoma Land Judging contest.

Our field offices have been assisting farmers and ranchers with conservation planning and application and we have additional Farm Bill contracts being processed at the field office level. I would only challenge our field office staff to continue to treat our clients as they would like to be treated themselves by any business. No client should wait more than 5 to 10 working days for news about their product, service, or payment and a decision should be communicated to that client within that timeframe whether favorable or adverse. Given that the client bears part of the cost of their contract, they are entitled to prompt information and payment. I want to thank all of you for making my priorities your priorities and NRCS helping people help the land. I hope to visit you soon!

*Angel Figueroa, Director*

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

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## Civil Rights Compliance Training

The National Employee Development Center sent lead instructor, *Jerry Pearce* to teach the “Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery” class with *Jolene Lau*, co-instructor. 23 students from within the Pacific Islands Area (PIA) met in Honolulu the last week in April to acquire the training. In class, students learned about the laws and regulations pertaining to program delivery, our responsibilities based on the Civil Rights Act, forms of discrimination, importance of inclusion and diversity, steps to conduct program outreach, and effective use of management tools. In addition, a group activity offered students the chance to hold a mock field office appraisal. They were given a number of documents and had to decide as a group if the documents displayed compliance by a fictitious field office staff. The two and a half days in Honolulu saved the government an estimated \$39,000 in airfare, lodging, and per diem. Thank you to everyone in management for supporting this local training for the PIA! Jerry really appreciated the warmth and friendly attitude of the PIA employees.

## In Celebration of Black History Month, NRCS welcomed honored speaker!



*Deloris Guttman*

The state office invited a guest speaker to do a presentation to employees on the history of African Americans in Hawaii. *Deloris Guttman* is the historian with the African American Diversity Cultural Center (AADCC) in Honolulu. In addition to her historical presentation, Deloris presented our very own *Tom Brandt* with a Certificate of Appreciation for his volunteer services in January 2013 to AADCC. Thank you Tom for your service and congratulations on your award!



## Asian Heritage Month



*Pictured left to right: Angel Figueroa introduces Gloria Uyehara as Tom Brandt and Tony Ingersoll listen.*

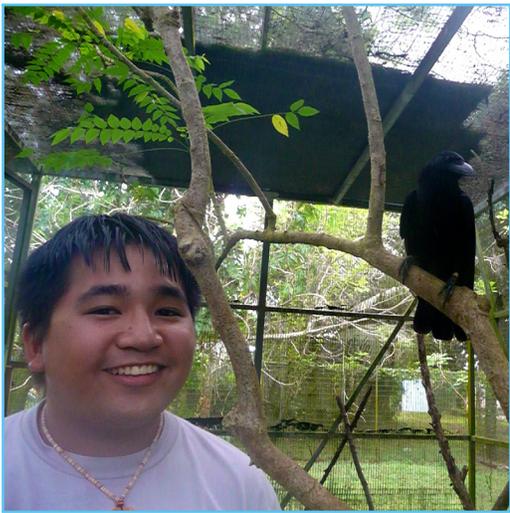
May 2013, in celebration of the national Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the state office invited a guest speaker to do a presentation to employees. Mrs. *Gloria Uyehara* is the retired executive director from the Honolulu-Pacific Federal Executive Board and has 42 years of federal service.

In her presentation, Gloria shared her experience growing up as a third generation Asian in Hawaii. Her background and expertise is in human resources and leadership development. The purpose of her presentation was to help us improve communication and collaboration skills.

Her motivational speech covered inclusion, generational gaps, respecting differences, encouraging diversity, and learning more about new cultures. In addition, Gloria covered strategies for managing different people in the best way. For example, she reminded us that we have a choice on how we respond to situations and that our personality affects our environment.

We can make our workplace an enjoyable experience by celebrating our multi-cultural awareness and increasing our team dynamics. Thank you Gloria, we appreciate the reminder!

## Earth Team Volunteer



*Anthony Tornito with the critically endangered and last Mariana crow on Guam at local Department of Agriculture.*

Hāfa Adai.

Being an Earth Team volunteer since April 2008 has opened up many opportunities for me in the Pacific through the course of my high school life and it continues to open up more networks in college. From Guam through Hawai‘i, I have learned much about this region and what challenges these islands face in a world that chooses development and importing over the usage of natural resources. By observing these changes in the Pacific, I have chosen to major in biology to be a future environmental biologist; and to this day, I continue to gain experience on the Pacific’s natural resources and their vulnerability alongside development.

Here on Guam, I volunteer at the Guam Service Center with the typical clerical services but also; I am granted the opportunity to go out to the field and observe farming on Guam (a practice that is practiced by a handful of individuals). Aside volunteering with the USDA NRCS PIA West Office, I also volunteer with the local Department of Agriculture and work with Guam’s endangered birds the ko’ko’ (Guam rail), sihek (Guam kingfisher), and the āga (Mariana crow). From gaining all this knowledge through previous experiences, I continue to promote conservation and sustainable practices on the island and at home.

## Taro Field Day with CTAHR

*By Cheryl Lambert, East Area Resource Conservationist*

The University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources hosted a very success 2013 Taro Propagate, Protect and Perpetuate Field Day on June 21st in the afternoon at their research station in Waimanalo in Windward Oahu for approximately 150 men, women and children. Even though it rained that day, people were interested in learning about taro growing, variety trials and poi making. The field trials are a collection of the UH CTAHR’s Waimanalo Germplasm, and included a visit to organic taro production fields, presentations on dryland and aquaponic taro production techniques, phytosanitation requirements and apple snail infestation prevention.

Several agencies and organizations participated in the event, and networked with attendees and CTAHR staff including the Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture, USDA- NRCS and the Farm Service Agency, Aiea, Friends of the Hawaii Farm Bureau and the Taro Security and Purity Taskforce. Outreach materials included information about conservation planning, technical assistance, financial assistance and easement programs, careers with the NRCS, and NRCS partners with special emphasis for beginning, limited resource and woman farmers and nursery growers and Asian/Pacific Islanders, and services available through the USDA Service Center in Aiea. Folks enjoyed the presentations, viewing various displays, field trials, poi pounding and processing demonstrations and taro chip and poi tasting.



*Photo by Cheryl Lambert*

# Employee Spotlight

Hello, my name is Brent Schumacher. I'm an engineer in the PIA West Area Office in Guam. Originally from California, I've worked for the NRCS in the drizzly forest and bottom lands of Humboldt County, and after that, the pastoral North Bay. I've been here, on Guam for six and a half years.

Guam is far. One comes to that realization flying west from Hawaii. As a matter of fact, Guam is so far, when I call back home to California I'm calling from the future. We're definitely in Asia. If you're looking for Guam on a map (you probably need a bigger map), draw a line with your finger from Japan going south; and with another finger from the Philippines going east. Where those lines meet, that's the general area.

Guam is diverse. There are people here from all over, permanent residents and visitors. This place has been a seafarer's stopover for hundreds of years; long before Magellan presumably "discovered" the island. Visiting the local Kmart is as exotic as wandering into the cantina scene in Star Wars (except with unflattering florescent lighting). Check the demographics yourselves.

Logistics and clear communication are challenges we consider in our engineering designs. Building materials are scarce, and unless it fits in a shoebox, anything mailed here is costly and takes a long time to get here. We commonly source building materials for cooperators; the field and engineering staff have an intimate knowledge of the inventory at local hardware stores, and online retailers with a favorable shipping policy. Additionally, construction plans that would usually require four pages all of a sudden are now 20 pages and look like a set of instructions from Ikea (fewer words and more detailed drawings). The people that build things usually know what they're doing, but frequently, English is not their first language.

Is there farming out there in Micronesia? There certainly is, and anyone who has flown over these islands can see, there is potential for a lot more. The farms are a lot smaller than what folks might be used to state side; imagine 10 acres as the average size farm. This does not make an engineering project any less complicated; it just increases the level of precision. These somewhat traditional tropical agricultural practices are so vastly different than rectangular corn fields in Iowa; meeting program requirements is sometimes like forcing a square peg in a round hole.



*Brent Schumacher  
Civil Engineer, Guam*

These islands are subject to typhoons, earthquakes, hellacious rainfall, and intense uv sunlight. This further complicates the design process. Anything plastic turns brittle, anything steel rusts. Concrete is usually the best option for structural practices, and sometimes the final design is more elaborate (sturdy) than what was initially imagined by the farmer, planner and engineer.

There are social issues that indirectly affect the mission of the NRCS: Guam's undefined political status, an indigenous Chamorro population that is now a minority, high prices and low wages, and a dependency on imported food to name a few. Did you know in the grocery store local bananas are more expensive than those imported from Ecuador?

All in all, the outlook for the NRCS in the West PIA is encouraging. The field staff is doing an excellent job of finding motivated farmers to work with. It would be nice for residents and visitors of Micronesia and the Marianas to be able to buy local meat and produce at a reasonable price.

# Interactive Game for Public Events

By Jolene Lau, State Public Affairs Specialist



Here are just a few of the places that we've used the interactive games. "Farm Fair" at Kualoa Ranch on July 13-14, 2013 reached 5,000 visitors. Thank you to **Tony & Cynthia Ingersoll**, **Gregory Koob**, **Roxane Torres**, **Susan Kubo**, **Brian Tom**, **Donna Hopwood**, **Sharon Sawdey**, and **Jim Hancock** for volunteering at that event! "Science Alive" Day at the Bishop Museum on March 17, 2013 reached 3,762 visitors. Thank you to **Tony Ingersoll**, **Gregory Koob**, **Adam Reed**, and **Valerie Russell** for volunteering at that event! "Ocean Fest" at Turtle Bay on June 9, 2012 reached 1,500 visitors. Thank you to **Gregory Koob** and **Gail Ichikawa** (retired) for volunteering at that event!

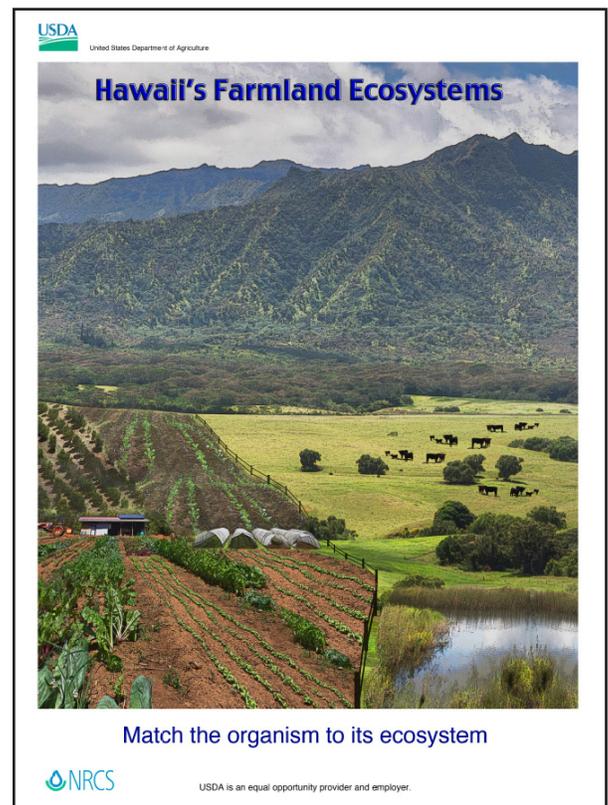


Sample of game pieces (above) and board (below).

Back in 2010, with the creative and innovative ideas from **Gregory Koob** and **Gail Ichikawa** (retired), we developed an interactive game to attract and educate the general public about who we are and what we do. It started off with a focus on conservation practices. Both Greg and Gail designed a beautiful poster and five matching game pieces with their mastered artistry. The poster was laminated to accommodate multiple uses and handle various weather conditions. With light weight metal sheets, we fabricated the game board using an adjustable easel board. Using magnet clips as the game pieces, each picture was cut out and laminated for multiple use and handling the weather. The back of the game piece has information about where it should be placed on the board.

After the "Conservation Practices" game was such a hit at the Farm Fair, the creative designers developed the second game for Wetlands Day with the theme, "Where do Hawaiian waterbirds nest?" The audience had to match six different game pieces to the wetland scene.

When we received all the positive feedback from the audience, the RTT team took another step forward in creating, "Farmland Ecosystems" with seven matching game pieces.



## Thank you Carl Hashimoto!

*By Vicki Draeger, Hawaii Sustainable Farm*

It has been my experience that when people are unhappy or displeased with a service they are quick to write a letter of complaint. However, I think that outstanding service deserves recognition, and I want to thank you and all those involved with the implementation and oversight of the Natural Resources and Conservation Services on Maui for your outstanding work. I have been particularly happy with Carl Hashimoto.

We are a very small family farm. My husband and I both have other full-time jobs and my son Rob is the full-time farmer with my husband spending every free moment working with Rob. We got our NRCS Plan early on, and I don't know what we would have done without it. Our 9+ acres are fully protected from the many deer in this area with an 8 foot fence, we have installed drip irrigation and have a three acre area planted in Native Plants. We hope to prove the truth of the olelo noeau: Hahai no ka ua i ka ulula'au (the rain follows the forest).

We are currently finishing our pasture planting and cross-fencing, more irrigation and cover crop are next. Carl Hashimoto has helped every step of the way. His professionalism, wisdom, and support have been key to the successful completion of our projects. Without NRCS we...well...I don't think we'd have a farm, and most certainly we would not have been able to establish it in a way that is so respectful of the aina. Not that we wouldn't have wanted to, but because we wouldn't have had a clue how to begin. Having deadlines (and they have been realistic) has helped keep us on track and moving forward. Only because we could see the possibilities, as a result of our NRCS plan, we extended ourselves and purchased an additional 10 acres which we also plan to farm.

We have all learned so much, and I just wanted to thank you. It is heartening to know that there is a government program being so well run and implemented. Mahalo nui Carl!

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

## Personnel Update

### Incoming:

Mandy Chen, STEM Fellow, Aiea  
Jewel Montgomery, STEM Fellow, East Area  
Jessica Newpher, Program Manager, State Office  
Richard Patterson, District Conservationist, Aiea  
Jan Reyes, Student Trainee, Lihue

### Outgoing:

Matthew Bull, expiration of temporary appointment  
Cameron Delligatti, transfer to Tennessee  
Dave Fischer, retirement

**Five Year Length of Service:** Keni Reyes

**Ten Year Length of Service:** Preston Irwin

## PLA Graduation



*Jolene Lau w/ Toni Allen of the Federal Executive Board.*

The Pacific Leadership Academy held a graduation ceremony for the Class of 2013 Senior Leaders and Emerging Leaders on July 19th. Unfortunately photos were not available of Ted McArthur, Ben Vinhateiro, and Nicholas Saumweber. Congratulations to all the graduates!

## Update of Korean Natural Farming

By Adam Reed, Water Quality Specialist, State Office

The Korean Natural Farming (KNF) system is a style of agricultural production which is closely related to organic farming, but relies heavily on the use of indigenous soil microorganisms (IMO's). These IMO's are grown in a starch-based substrate until an adequate supply is obtained, then the IMO substrate is used to inoculate the soil. This would seem to be a good soil health practice to improve the soil biology, and there are strong testimonial reports of improved plant production from farmers who have implemented this technology. However, scientifically collected data evaluating the benefits of Korean Natural Farming is less conclusive. The University of Hawaii is currently developing literature on the correct cultivation techniques of IMO's.

One successful example of how NRCS is working with KNF producers is the adoption of the Deep Litter Piggery Design. Not only are the IMO's used to inoculate the soil, they are also used to inoculate animal waste systems to increase the aerobic decomposition of waste. The concept of the Deep Litter Design is to raise pigs on two-three feet of carbon-based bedding which has been inoculated with IMO's. These systems are self-contained and the manure is decomposed on site, which greatly reduces the need for land applications. These systems are growing in popularity in Hawaii, and the Hawaii Department of Health - Waste Water Branch has approved all Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan's (CNMP's) for these systems.

Agricultural producers who are following the KNF techniques are generally very concerned about the environment, quality of crops, and living and working in harmony with nature. These producers, like all producers in the Pacific Islands Area, face numerous resource concerns ranging from soil erosion problems to a lack of pollinating insects. The NRCS should be able to work with these producers through both technical conservation planning and farm bill program delivery to address many of their resource problems.

NRCS KNF Technical Team: May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## Director's Visit to West Area

By John "Bart" Lawrence, ADFO West Area



Opal Worm & Medicinal Farm | Guam



With Mr. Ren Chao | Guam



San Nicolas operation | Guam