

Resource Kona

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Summer 2013

KONA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Two Cooperators of the Year for the Kona SWCD

This year the Kona SWCD recognized the conservation work of two local producers awarding them the Cooperator of the Year. There were five nominees so the decision was not an easy one. Tricia Bobnar and her husband Denver Leaman of Ohia Forest Farm have restored a beautiful native forest and continually add to the native plantings. Gone is the Christmas Berry! Trisha and Denver also participated in a recent UH study on shade grown coffee.



An old moss covered rock wall is one of the features of this forest as is the variety of birdsong you can hear.



More moss covering rocks and roots. The slash pile on the left side of the photo is all that remains of a Christmas berry tree.

Our second award winner was Mary Lynn Garner of Blackfoot Farm. Mary Lynn carefully considers the environment of her farm in her planting decisions. The land is at about 600' elevation and has a very Mediterranean type of climate. Figs are a popular item from this farm as are herbs and some fruits, including banana, papaya, and pineapple to name a few. Mary Lynn is also using part of her land to restore an area of dryland forest. (Additional photos and story continues on page 5).

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Special points of interest:

- Kona SWCD meetings take place the second Tuesday of the month from 8am-10am and you are invited.
- If you want to learn more about how to protect your natural resources, give us a call, 322-2484 x 100.

Taken Too Soon, Kawika's Passing

It is with great sadness that the Kona SWCD reports that one of our directors, our Treasurer, Kawika Marquez passed away this past April. Kawika was a man who thought first of his community. He was instrumental in developing the Kealakehe 20/20 plan and was actively pursuing the development of a mobile meat processing unit to increase the island's capability for small livestock operations and meat production. It is our hope to pick-up where Kawika left off.

It was also his hope that the Big Island RC&D would increase its capacity and sustainability. As vital to its success as Kawika was it is our desire to see RC&D continue to succeed and thrive. The Big Island RC&D is accepting donations in his memory.

Our condolences go out to his family, particularly his wife Jean. We will remember Kawika for the kind giving man he was and the dedication he had toward his community.



David "Kawika" Marquez

1946-2013

HACD Annual Conference

All of the state's 16 soil and water conservation districts belong to the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts (HACD) and met this month for our annual conference hosted by the Mauna Kea SWCD.

Representatives from the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Health were available as well as a representative from Mayor Kenoi's office.

We also heard from Angel Figueroa on the direction of NRCS. He stated NRCS follows the lead of the SWCDs in determining the resource concerns to be addressed. This does not mean that SWCDs have carte blanche in directing NRCS but it does recognize the value of the partnership between NRCS and SWCDs.

Quite possibly, the highlight of the day was the presentation by KTA's own Derek Kirisu. Derek is also the host for two locally produced cable television shows, *Living in Paradise* and *Seniors Living in Paradise*. Years ago, with the demise of the last sugar plantations on the Big Island, Derek worked on developing a brand that could incorporate local agriculture products and as a result the Mountain Apple brand was born.

Mountain Apple brand includes over 200 different products including its original product offering, milk, as well as items like dried fish, poi, Portuguese sausage and even *All Kine Bread*. KTA and Derek eliminated the need to buy loaf bread, and hamburger rolls and hot dog rolls, now all you need is *All Kine Bread*.

We also visited some local farms and ranches during the conference. All the producers advocate diversification. It opens up new revenue streams and additional value added product development opportunities. During our visit to Kahua Ranch we found out the one wind turbine they installed produces all the electricity they need, and then some.



Conference organizer Margaret Fowler of the Mauna Kea SWCD with KTA's Derek Kirisu



A Waimea lettuce farm going multiple varieties of lettuces, kales and other leafy green vegetables.

These conferences generally provided an opportunity to learn more about the history of the hosting district and this year was no different. One of the ranches that we stopped at was Anna Ranch, the home of Anna Lindsey Perry-Fiske, also known as *The First Lady of Ranching* in Hawaii. Anna's passed away in 1995 but her dream, to develop a heritage center to honor the history of ranching in Hawaii and the legacy of her family, was carried out for her. (cont. on page 8)

Taking Care of Our Most Valuable Resource - People

The topic of health care is on everyone's minds these days, and here in Hawaii that is certainly true in the agricultural industry.

Started in January 2005, West Hawaii Community Health Center (WHCHC) provides comprehensive and integrated medical, dental and behavioral health services in the West Hawaii region, to people living as far north as Kawaihae and as far south as Ocean View and Miloli'i, regardless of their ability to pay. It also offers services in a culturally appropriate manner that promotes community well-being through the practice of *malama pono* (caring for others in a way that is right).

Services include management of chronic conditions; immunizations; TB testing; behavioral health assessment, treatment and/or referrals; pediatric and geriatric specialties; women's health and family planning; STD testing, treatment and counseling; physicals for employment, school attendance and sports; keiki health-screening, treatment, and follow-up; and a smoking cessation program. WHCHC can assist farmers and their families by providing guidance navigating the health insurance system for those who are uninsured.

Dental services are available for infants, children & teens (up through age 17yrs) at the Kealahou site and for adults for emergencies only at the Dental Mobile Van at the Friendly Place in Kailua-Kona.

And perhaps most importantly, West Hawaii Health Center would like to strengthen our partnerships and look to future collaborative initiatives involving the agricultural community. We would like to extend an invitation for feedback on how we can best provide appropriate avenues for outreach and community level interventions in the areas of farm health and safety, education, or prevention activities for workers and their families.

We welcome your feedback, suggestions, concerns, and any questions regarding services. Please call Jasmin Kiernan, RN, Director of Innovations and Transformation, WHCHC, 808-326-3882, for more information or to request a talk story at your location.

Please see the specific site information, hours of operation, and services for the 3 WHCHC centers and Dental Van below.

West Hawaii Community Health Center, Kailua Kona

Phone: 808-326-5629
Location: 75-5751 Kuakini Hwy, Suite 104, Kailua Kona
Services: Medical: all ages
Hours: Monday-Thursday 8am-7pm
Friday-Saturday 8am-5pm

West Hawaii Community Health Center, Kealahou

Phone: 808-323-8005, for keiki appointments
808-236-5629, for adult appointments
Location: Selwyn Plaza, 81-6627 Mamalahoa Hwy.,
Suite 106, Kealahou
Services: Medical: All ages; Dental, Keiki
Hours: **Medical: Keiki**
Monday-Friday 8am-5pm
Medical: Adult
Tuesday-Friday: 8am-5pm
Dental: Keiki
Monday-Thursday: 7:30am-5pm

West Hawaii Community Health Center, Waikoloa

Phone: 808-769-5169,
Location: Waikoloa Highlands Shopping Center, 68
1845 Waikoloa Rd., Suite 207
Services: Medical: All ages
Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

West Hawaii Community Health Center Dental Mobile Van, Kailua Kona

Phone: 808-329-0465
Location: Hope Services Hawaii, 74-5593 Pawai Place,
Kailua Kona
Hours: Monday-Tuesday 8am-4:30pm

Two Cooperators of the Year for the Kona SWCD (cont. from page 1)



Above are photos from Blackfoot Farm . On the left you can see the extensive conservation cover being used to prevent soil erosion. The center photo shows the reforestation project on this land the photo on the right shows vegetables being produced in easily accessible raised beds.

Our other Cooperator of the Year Nominees included Ken Verosko of the South Kona Fruit Stand for the work being done along both sides the Ki'ilea Stream. Ken has cleared lots of invasive species then installed fencing to keep pigs from digging up and through his mulch. Ken is in the process of establishing conservation cover to help prevent erosion. He will also be planting native species along the stream's riparian area.



The two top photos to the left show the Ki'ilea Stream bed. This is on Kamehameha Schools land leased to Ken Verosko of the South Kona Fruit Stand. This stream overflowed in November 2007 and caused extensive damage in the area. The far left photo shows the stream bed. The photo to the right of that shows a new coffee field where invasive species used to reside.



Below photos are of the Third Lava Flow Coffee Farm. The Tsugawas cleared the land of guinea grass and planted a coffee orchard. The photo on the left shows their mulch with conservation cover being established. The center photo shows the terraces they installed to more safely manage the coffee trees and the photo on the right shows why they need terracing.

The Third Lava Flow Coffee Farm, owned and managed by Ralph and Denice Tsugawa was also a nominee. They took a piece of land that was nothing but Guinea Grass and converted it to a coffee farm. It has taken a few years and a lot of hard work to get to where they are today. They plan to continuously improve their coffee lands and then work on improving an area of forest located on their land. (cont. on page 8)

Soils, Unlocking the Basics

Healthy, fully functioning soil provides an environment that sustains and nourishes plants, soil microbes, and beneficial insects. Managing for soil health is one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment. Positive results are often realized immediately and last well into the future.

Soil is made up of air, water, decayed plants residue, organic matter from living and dead organisms, and mineral matter, such as sand, silt, and clay. Increasing soil organic matter typically improves soil health since organic matter affects several critical soil functions, including nutrient cycling and water-holding capacity. Healthy soils are porous and allow air and water to move freely through them.

Here is how to improve soil health:

- ◆ Disturb the soil as little as possible
- ◆ Grow many different species of plants through rotations and diverse mixture of cover crops
- ◆ Plant cover crops around harvest to keep living roots growing in the soil for as much of the year as possible
- ◆ Keep the soil surface covered with residue year round

Soil Health Management: Implementing Soil Health Management Systems can lead to increased organic matter and soil organisms, reduced soil compaction, and improved nutrient storage and cycling. As an added bonus, fully functioning, healthy soils absorb and retain more water, making them less susceptible to runoff and erosion. This means more water will be available for crops when they need it. Soil Health Management Systems allow farmers to enjoy profits because they spend less on fuel and energy and they produce higher crop yields from improved soil conditions.

Dig a little, learn a lot: Soil is a living system and it should look, smell, and feel alive. Dig in to discover what your soil can tell you about its health and production potential. Healthy soils look dark, crumbly, and porous and is home to worms and other organisms that squirm, creep, hop or crawl. Healthy soil smells sweet and earthy. It feels soft, moist and friable and allows plant roots to grow unimpeded.

Do Not Disturb: The soil's natural biological cycles and structure can be disrupted through tillage, improper chemical disturbance, or excessive livestock grazing. By managing, reducing or eliminating these activities, farmers will benefit from better plant growth, reduced soil erosion, increased profit margins and better wildlife habitat.

Discover the Cover: Biodiversity-growing more plants in rotation increases the success of most agricultural systems. Diversity above ground improves diversity below ground. Using cover crops and increasing crop rotation diversity help restore soil health, protect against erosion and groundwater leaching, and provide livestock feed and wildlife habitat.

Healthy Soils Lead To:

- ◆ **Increased Production:** Organic matter increases and soil organisms flourish, both of which improve soil structure, aeration, water retention, drainage and nutrient availability.
- ◆ **Increased Profits:** Tillage reduction or elimination means fewer passes over fields and healthy soils rely less on fertilizers and pesticides.
- ◆ **Natural Resource Protection:** Healthy soils hold more water for use by plants. The soil's water-holding capacity reduces runoff that can cause flooding and increases the availability of water to plants during droughts. By holding more water, nutrients and pesticides, healthy soils reduce nutrient and pesticide losses to lakes, rivers, and streams. Groundwater is also protected because there can be less leaching from healthy soil. Additionally, fewer trips across fields with farm machinery means fewer emissions and better air quality.



For more information, or to apply for any USDA Farm Service Agency program, please call your local USDA Service Center. NOTE: Fees, eligibility requirements, income and payment limitations may apply with any of the programs listed below. Please check with the nearest FSA office for specific rules. The FSA office in Hilo can be reached at 933-8381 ext 1.

Emergency Conservation Program

Vog Damaged Fence Replacement

Vog is known to cause accelerated deterioration of fencing. If you are experience accelerated corrosion to your fences contact Kristen Kiriu at 933-8335 for additional information. You will need to report the type of fence and its length.

CREP has been authorized for 2013

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program has been authorized for 2013. Applications are now being accepted, deadline to contract is September 30, 2013. Contact Lester Ueda at the FSA office in Hilo at 933-8341. If you have a watercourse, even if it has not run water in long time, this program might be for you. In a general sense, you remove the invasive species within a riparian area, you have a fence installed then you establish native planting with the riparian area. NRCS defines riparian areas as lands that occur along watercourses and water bodies. Typical examples include flood plains and streambanks.

NAP Claims

NAP, the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, requires all disaster losses be documented by the FSA loss adjuster. Contact Lester Ueda at 933-8345 for more information.

NAP: Notice of Loss

Grass: Request a Notice of Loss as soon as you determine loss from weather related conditions, usually for drought.

Crops such as ginger, sweet potato, lettuce, tropical fruits, etc.: Report with 15 days once a loss in yield becomes apparent. The claim also requires an appraisal once the field is harvested, make sure you request one.

It is the farmer's responsibility to ensure an appraisal is done by the FSA loss adjuster, Lupo Pau-pore. She will take the information she needs and release the acreage back to the farmer.

AGI Certification

There is a new AGI form available for 2013. All NAP participants are required to complete this form. You can call the Kona SWCD at 322-2484 ext. 100 or Lester Ueda at 933-8345 for additional information.

81-948 Waena'Oihana Loop
Kealahou, HI 96750
322-2484 ext. 100
Fax: 322-3735

Board of Directors:
Chairman: Rick Robinson
Vice Chairman: Greg Hendrickson
Treasurer:
Secretary: Denise Light
Director: Keith Unger

Staff: Mary Robblee, Conservation Assistant
Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 8am-10am at the USDA Kealahou Service Center below the post office. All are welcome and the facility is ADA accessible.

Organization: The Kona Soil and Water Conservation District (KSWCD) is a government subdivision of the State of Hawaii organized under Hawaii State Law, HRS Chapter 180

Function: To utilize available technical, financial and educational resources to focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land users with regards to conservation of soil, water, and natural resources.

Service: The District serves the communities and land users within North and South Kona

Why: The District is committed to the promotion of wise land use and resource stewardship.

Were on the web at
www.kswcd.org

Two Cooperators of the Year for the Kona SWCD (cont. from page 5)

Our final Cooperator of the Year nominee was Suzann and Mikal Barchenger. They have a coffee farm that was once nothing but an infestation of invasive woody species. Their farm now practices water conservation with their conservation cover and mulching. Both of those practices also help prevent soil erosion by not allowing the soil to be available for erosion.



The above photos are from the Barchenger Farm. The photo on the right is representative of what was on the land before it was a coffee farm. The center and left side photos show the conservation cover that was installed to prevent soil erosion. The photo on the right also clearly shows the area under the coffee trees that are mulched regularly from onsite mulch sources, particularly palm fronds.

HACD Annual Conference (cont. from page 3)

Anna's Ranch was placed on the Hawaii State Register of Historic Places in 2005, and on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The ranch house was built circa 1910 and the out-buildings have been restored to the period when Anna was living there, including a blacksmith shop.

We were fortunate that the ranch's blacksmith was on hand to provide us a demonstration of his craft, naturally he fabricated something related to ranching, an iron hook you could put on a wall or door to hang coats or hats or anything you wanted. The hook resembled a bull, horns and all, naturally!

All in all it was another great conference of sharing success stories and discussing challenges that we all face as natural resource conservation professionals. Next year's conference will be on Oahu