

Introduction

Hi, I'm Harry Toki, NRCS District Conservationist at the USDA Hilo Service Center. I'm reading this background report written by Dudley Kubo, NRCS project manager for the Kaumana project.

I'd like to also introduce ...(others from the FO or the District).

Through my office, the Natural Resources Conservation Service assists farmers and ranchers to protect and conserve natural resources, such as soil, water, and wildlife. The NRCS also provides programs to help communities with water resources problems. In the 1970s, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention program was used to address the flood problem occurring in the Kaumana and Ainako areas of upper Hilo which affected sugar fields and the expanding residential areas.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Wailuku-Alenaio Watershed project installed the floodwater diversion along Akolea Road which has prevented a considerable amount of flood damage in the Ainako area, a diversion above Chongmanville, and improvements to the stream at the Kaumana Drive bridge by Chong's Road.

The Kaumana Drive Flood Control project is a new part of the Wailuku-Alenaio Watershed. In 1999, the County asked NRCS to revise the Wailuku-Alenaio Watershed plan to account for the conversion of land from agriculture to residential.

The Wailuku-Alenaio Watershed Project is a partnership effort between the County of Hawaii, Waiakea Soil and Water Conservation District, and the NRCS. In this partnership, the NRCS provides planning and technical services and funds most of the construction. The County provides local project leadership, landrights, road and bridge construction, and long-term operation and maintenance. The Waiakea Soil and Water Conservation District ensures grass-roots input by the community and that the resulting projects meet the community objectives.

For the Kaumana Project, the County received federal funds from NRCS to engage the Belt Collins Hawaii planning team.

A major push to the planning activities for the Kaumana project came as a result of the damages suffered in the November 2000 flood. NRCS brought in specialists from our mainland offices to evaluate the problem and to propose alternative solutions. We met with many of the community during that period. However, due to the shortage of NRCS planning staff in Hawaii, the Planning Reports and environmental documents were not undertaken until funding became available to hire a planning contractor.

In 2005, NRCS transferred partial funding for the planning contract to the County with more funding made available in 2006. The planning contract with Belt Collins was executed in the fall of 2006.

I would be happy to answer any questions that I can. If I cannot answer your question I will get an answer for you from our planner.

Thank you!