

April 2016 West Oahu SWCD news: Stevie Whalen honored, CIG grants due May, success in conservation through the Good Growth Plan, webinar: Transition to Organic Production

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## Soil Health and Reforestation Workshop and Grant Opportunities for Farmers



**Join us on Saturday, April 9th for our free workshop to learn more.**

- Hear from experts as they share insights into soil health and reforestation concepts.
- Learn about grant programs and organizations that support these efforts.
- Visit local farms to learn about best management practices.
- Talk story with farmers who received grants.

**Attend Our Free Workshop**

Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 2016  
 8:30am - Noon  
 KEY Project, 47-200 Waihee Road  
 Kaneohe, HI 96744

**Register today at:**

<https://soilhealthandreforestation.eventbrite.com>

**Visit Us Online:**

[www.oahurcd.org](http://www.oahurcd.org)



O'ahu Resource Conservation & Development Council  
 Box 209, 92-1770 Kunia Road, Kunia, HI 96759 • (808) 622-9026 • [www.oahurcd.org](http://www.oahurcd.org)



Click "show images" to display this excellent flier. Register for the workshop on [Eventbrite](#) or [Facebook](#). Learn more about ORCD by visiting their [website](#).

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## STEPHANIE (STEVIE) WHALEN OF HARC RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR



Stephanie (Stevie) A. Whalen was honored as one of the change agents in agriculture in March of 2015. The Farm Credit 100 Fresh Perspectives Honorees include leaders and visionaries from across the country. Selected by a distinguished panel of industry representatives, the honorees are creating the future of agriculture and rural America through their dedication and innovation.

Stevie was chosen because of her remarkable story. She has a strong commitment to agriculture as an industry, and also to the lives of the farmers who contribute to it.

The Executive Director of the [Hawaii Agriculture Research Center](#) since 1994, Stevie has been with the organization since 1973. Overall, she has more than 40 years' experience in the agricultural industry in Hawaii. She has been involved in issues ranging from pesticide

registrations and monitoring, water quality monitoring, environmental community concerns over agriculture and asset management.

One of Stevie's biggest accomplishments is the creation of a holistic agriculture community at the site where low-income housing for agriculture workers was slated to be demolished. With a failing infrastructure, Superfund status and zoning concerns, Stevie saw only opportunity. Undaunted by many years of zoning, financial and bureaucratic roadblocks, she championed a team of leaders to support the development of a new community complete with educational facilities, a farmers' market, a gym and community center, and other facilities. The community must be located in close proximity to employment for the agricultural workers and made available at a price point these important economic contributors could afford.

Nearby, she directed the acquisition of some prime agriculture lands on a major highway corridor and preserved them in perpetuity for agriculture through a conservation easement. The site includes a state-of-the art research laboratory, offices, infrastructure and lands to support tillable crops.

“I believe in the need for agriculture and am inspired by the hard working people who make it possible,” says Stevie. “I hope to create a rural community model that is sustainable, energy independent and a desirable place to live.”

Stevie is a committed leader who works to find innovative solutions to some of the most difficult economic problems that face the agriculture community. Not dissuaded by roadblocks, she works to find common ground and always keeps her eye on the end goal: building a better life for the people of Hawaii and caring for the environment and society that the agriculture industry impacts.

Learn more about 100 Fresh Perspectives [here](#).

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### **Conservation Management in Hawaii: A Success Story From The Good Growth Plan**

Farmland is becoming increasingly rare around the world due to development and depletion, and Hawaii is no exception. Like anywhere else Syngenta produces seed, the soil must be protected and nourished to maintain and improve its productivity, in line with the “Rescue More Farmland” commitment of Syngenta’s Good Growth Plan.

Effective conservation starts with sound planning. Today, Syngenta managers on Oahu and Kauai routinely partner with professional conservation planners from groups such as the Oahu Resource Conservation District and the USDA’s NRCS (Natural Resources

Conservation Service) to develop the best plan for a given farm on their respective islands.

Conservation plans include many best management practices. Examples include cover crop, vegetative barriers, tillage practices, contour management, terraces, wind breaks and water ways. All are geared to protect the soil resource from erosion. Conservation plans for a given farm also ensure that potential wildlife habitat and archaeological sites are evaluated in order to protect native species and any historical artifacts.

Cover crops are a great example of how Syngenta protects the soil from wind and water erosion. Syngenta grows a number of different cover crop species, such as sunn hemp, oats, sunflower, forage (tillage) radish, peas and beans.

Operation Pollinator dovetails in nicely with the cover crop efforts in Hawaii. The program involves growing cover crops such as sunflower and sunn hemp to attract bees and other beneficial insects such as minute pirate bugs, lacewings and lady beetles.

As longstanding members of the agricultural community who have grown seed in Hawaii since the 1960's and who hope to be here for many more years, Syngenta and its employees are in it for the long run.

"Syngenta is dedicated to being a good neighbor, as well as being a good steward of the land." says Grant Manning, Site Operations Manager at Kunia. "Our farming and conservation methods are proof of our commitment to Rescuing More Farmland and Helping Biodiversity to Flourish."

*Learn more about Syngenta's Good Growth Plan at [www.goodgrowthplan.com](http://www.goodgrowthplan.com)*

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Welcome Puaonaona Stibbard, who will join us as an Oahu Conservation Specialist with the Hawaii Association of Conservation Districts on April 4 in part-time status until May 1, when she will be full time. She



will be working with Jeana Cadby, Conservation Specialist, who will also continue to support Oahu Cooperators and Districts as a part-time staff.



### **FUNDING NOTICE: NRCS CIG Grant**

The FY 2016 National Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) has been announced. The application period is now open through May 10, 2016. Please inform any interested individuals about this funding opportunity. Please review the [2016 CIG Announcement for Program Funding](#) (APF) for application requirements.

Applications for CIG projects must be submitted through Grants.gov with a PDF to [nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov).

[Click on this link for the press release](#) to announces the \$20 Million Commitment to CIG.

More information can be found on the CIG webpage:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>

This FY2016 CIG FAQs may also provide information for answering common CIG questions.

The National CIG Program Contact is: [nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov) Or you can call: Mike Bennett, CIG Program Manager (202) 720-1895 or Melleny Cotton, CIG Program Analyst (202) 720-7412



### NRCS Webinars

- April 5, 2016 - 3:00pm Eastern: [Transitioning to Organic Production](#): Learn about the barriers and opportunities for producers interested in organic certification. This presentation will introduce participants to *Making the Transition to Organic: Ten Farmer Profiles*, a publication from the University of Minnesota that features both crop and livestock producers. The basics of organic certification will also be discussed.
- April 12, 2016 2:00pm Eastern: [Grazing Management on CRP Acres to Improve Soil Health](#): Learn about the mineral cycle in a mature forage system, improving wildlife habitat, and how to efficiently and economically provide fence and water to enable grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields.
- April 26, 2:00pm Eastern: [Soil Erosion: A Historical Perspective](#). Participants will gain an understanding of the impact soil erosion has had on civilization through time and what society needs to do to protect this precious resource.

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### West Oahu SWCD Directors

Larry Jeffs (Chair), Peter Gibson, Alan Gottlieb, Taylor Kellerman, & John McHugh.

**April West Oahu SWCD meeting:** Tuesday April 26, 12:30. Location: Crop Production Services Conference Room located in the Upper Kunia HARC building. Learn more at <http://www.oahuswcd.org>.

**Tri-District Meeting:** April 14, 3 - 6pm. Location and agenda will be announced on the Lt. Gov's website.

The West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to building partnerships that strengthen agriculture in Hawaii and contribute to a vibrant island community, environment, and economy.

Newsletter compiled by Michelle Gorham, West Oahu SWCD and edited by Cindy Pinick, HARC. Submit articles and information to [Michelle@OahuSWCD.org](mailto:Michelle@OahuSWCD.org)



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