

# A Brief History

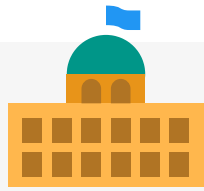
## West Oahu Soil & Water Conservation District

### Introduction



Soil and water health are critical. Over-tilling, removal of stabilizing vegetation, drought, and high winds resulted in the dustbowl: a period of massive crop failure and environmental stress during a time of war and economic uncertainty. President Franklin D. Roosevelt established programs to restore land health and mitigate for future disasters. States were encouraged to develop self-governing, state supported conservation districts, called SWCDs.

### 1940s



1947 - Hawaii State Legislature authorizes Chapter 180 relating to the creation of Soil Conservation Districts. Districts are managed by the people through locally elected and appointed boards. There is no cost to the farmer other than changes in farming practices they desire to make.

### 1967



Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is directed to provide the SWCDs with funding and administrative support.

### 2014



West O'ahu SWCD Directors note the shift in Hawaii agriculture from large centralized farms to small decentralized farms. They secure funds to hire staff for farmer education, technical assistance, k-12 education, community outreach, and more.

### TODAY

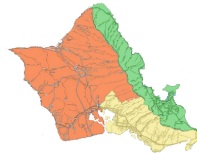


West Oahu SWCD advocates for best management practices to support soil and water health, which sustains our community and way of life in Hawaii. We proactively provide ranchers, farmers, land managers, and landowners with conservation technical assistance and education.



### 1930-35

1931 - Black Blizzards - Severe Dust Storms  
1934 - The Dust Bowl - Drought and poor land practices result in erosion, poverty & famine.  
1935: Congress passed Public Law 74-46, which declares "the wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands. . . is a menace to the national welfare," Secretary of Agriculture establishes the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to support conservation practices. Conservation Districts are established across the nation with over 1 billion acres are enrolled in new farming methods that support best practices.



### 1950

January 4, 1950, West O'ahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is formed. Jurisdiction covers from West Loch in Pearl City to Turtle Bay. This large district is the center of diversified agriculture in Hawaii.



### 1978

City and County of Honolulu's Revised Ordinances authorize permit exclusions for SWCD Cooperators who develop and implement conservation plans. This encourages best management of our shared resources and provides cost savings to farmers. More farmers start requesting District support.



### 2015

Hawaii's State Agriculture Land Use Baseline is released. O'ahu has nearly 1000 farms, 40,845 acres in active ranch and farm production, and nearly 10,000 acres in diversified agriculture - more than the rest of the state combined. The Governor sets a goal to double local food production by 2030.

Contact Us:  
WestOahuSWCD@gmail.com or 808.729.1676  
www.dlnr.hawaii.gov/SWCD/WestOahu  
\* A.P. White "Conservation Milestones"  
(form updated 09-01-2020)