

## Watershed Working Group

12 February 2014, 8:30-10am

### *Dates to Remember:*

- Feb 19<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – NRCS Cover Crop presentation, 8-10am
- Feb 26 (Wed) – NPS talk on Climate Monitoring
- May 14<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – Next Watershed Working Group meeting

### *Attendees:*

**BECQ:** Derek Chambers, Kathy Yuknavage, Avra Heller, Steven Johnson, Erik Lash, Gus Camacho, Ryan Okano, Clarissa Bearden, Jihan Buniag; **DPW:** Geri Dela Cruz; **USFWS:** Shelly Kremer; **Forestry:** Ben Cepeda, Frank Ada; **CHCC-BEH:** John Tagabuel; **USDA-NRCS:** Kendal Hicks; **Zoning:** Maryann Arriola; **NOAA:** Dana Okano

### *Meeting Notes:*

- I. Opening, introductions
- II. Main speaker: Kendal Hicks, NRCS EQIP program
  - a. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was renewed in the 2014 Farm Bill
  - b. EQIP cost-shares on strip-till/no-till, contour farming, field borders, vegetative barriers, cover crops, mulching, low-water crossings, animal waste management systems (dry litter, septic tanks, composting)
  - c. There is a possibility to get a programmatic waiver for combined animal/human waste management systems
  - d. Sister agency Farm Services Association does micro loans to assist farmers with their part of the cost
  - e. All work defers to state and local laws (e.g. Zoning, DEQ) for permissions and permitting
  - f. Discussion: piggeries and human waste disposal on Navy Hill, Tanapag, other sites need management
- III. Laolao Wildland Fire
  - a. A fire occurred in Laolao Bay in the swordgrass and Tangantangan area in the NE uplands on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Forestry and BECQ NPS/WQ observed the site and did not immediately detect the source of the fire. There is interest in planting in that area and doing something to prevent soil wash down the ravine at the next rain event. Forestry recommends contacting NMC Crees to access vetiver grass. Ryan recommended planting the vetiver differently than previously in Laolao to improve growth.
  - b. MMT observed the burn site on Tuesday and reported it to DPS Fire and BECQ. BECQ has photos for anyone interested.
- IV. Project updates:
  - a. Nat'l Park Service (Mike Gawel via email)
    - i. New superintendent Jim Richardson is on Guam, replaced Barbara Alberti
    - ii. NPS contractor Dave Simeral will be installing a new weather station at the park in Garapan later this month and will present a public talk about climate monitoring on Wednesday, Feb 26 in the evening with NPS Biotech Justin Mills
    - iii. Mar 3-6 NPS Aquatic Ecologist Dr. Dave Raikow and Mike Gawel will join Justin for groundwater and surface water monitoring in the park
    - iv. May 2014, botanists will be conducting a five-year re-survey of vegetation habitats in the park
  - b. DPW (Geri)
    - i. Using Federal Highway funds to do hazard elimination on Chalan Pale Arnol and Beach Road, to possibly include sidewalks. They welcome comments on plans for those areas.

- ii. Highway money is supposed to be used only for infrastructure, but since maintenance is such an issue, DPW received permission to use some of it to tend to the drainage maintenance.
  - c. USFWS (Shelly): Shelly's position is new on Saipan and as a result she is working on a variety of tasks including permitting, endangered species and others. Contact her for collaboration or upcoming programs/projects related to USFWS and keep her in mind for events.
  - d. Forestry (Ben): Plants are being prepared for Earth Day outplanting and Forestry is on board with proposed additional plantings in the Laolao area, especially the upper revegetation sites and areas that were burned last week.
  - e. Laolao Pride Campaign (Jihan): Outreach is continuing at schools and markets, plants and grass seed is being distributed to landowners and planting may begin again in the upper watershed. Landowners are invited to an Erosion Control training for Laolao on Mar 22<sup>nd</sup> and for Garapan on Mar 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - f. Zoning (Maryann): Zoning has an ongoing task with the Tourism Task Force to clean-up abandoned properties and public nuisances. They are also conducting outreach for new Zoning laws from 2013.
  - g. USDA-NRCS (Kendal): All are welcome to attend the NRCS Cover Crop presentation on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> at NRCS.
- V. Garapan CAP status report
- a. A group has formed led by DPW and BECQ to improve the storm drains and stormwater in the Garapan core area. The project will involve heavy equipment rental to clean storm ditches and underground pipes along Beach and Middle Road; long-term drainage maintenance plans; communal trash hauling and/or proof of proper disposal from homes and businesses; a Fats, Oils, and Grease outreach program; storm drain labeling ("Do not dump, drains to coral reefs") and mural contest; school education programs; and an increased enforcement presence in the area for violations such as littering, dumping, illegal land clearing, sanitation problems, etc. Interested groups can contact the BECQ Nonpoint Source and Water Quality Branch to get involved.
- VI. Next meeting
- a. May 14, 2014, Wednesday at 8:30am (topic TBD)
  - b. Future recommendations:
    - i. Zoning laws and planning (Zoning)
    - ii. Grease traps and FOG programs (BECQ)
    - iii. Watershed Assessment strategies – CRM may be able to do hydrology side of this
    - iv. CNMI Forestry programs and projects (Ben Cepeda or Vic)
    - v. DEQ/CRM MMT 10-year data analysis
    - vi. NPS: Regional aquatic ecologist about data and monitoring programs