

**U.S. Coral Reef Task Force  
Award Recipients  
American Samoa, August 2007**

**U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Policy Coordination:**

**Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program**

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) was established by the governments and administrations of the Pacific region and charged with assisting them in protecting and managing their environments and natural resources. SPREP has 21 Pacific island member countries and four countries with direct interests in the region. Their vision is that people of the Pacific islands are better able to plan, protect, manage and use their environment for sustainable development and their unique focus is to sustain the integrity of the ecosystems of the Pacific islands region to support life and livelihoods today and tomorrow. SPREP helps to coordinate the actions of members at the local, national, regional and international levels by providing technical and legal advice, and direct interventions, including the development of income-generating enterprises, resource management planning and ecosystem, species and threat management and monitoring.

SPREP provides assistance in response to specific country requests, involving careful participatory planning and consultation, and for the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), consistent with the priorities of their National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans. In addition, SPREP has been an invaluable member of the Regional Support Team that was established in 2006 to support the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau in achieving the goals set forth in the Micronesia Challenge: to effectively conserve at least 30% of near-shore marine resources and at least 20% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020.

Recently, as part of World Environment Day, SPREP emphasized the need for members to work closely with key partners to strengthen the conservation of coral reefs and mangroves to improve adaptation to climate change, through integration into existing national planning methods and strategies, as well as practical, on the ground initiatives to support communities.

**Lelei Peau, Chair, U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee and Deputy Director,  
American Samoa Department of Commerce**

The All Islands Committee (AIC) was established in 1994 by the governor-appointed Points of Contact (POCs) from the U.S. states, territories and commonwealths of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The AIC was recognized as a key element of the overall U.S. Coral Reef Initiative in Presidential Executive Order 13089 which established the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) in 1998. The State of Florida joined the Committee as an Associate member in 2000 and became a full member in

early 2007. Affiliate Members of the AIC are the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Lelei Peau has provided outstanding leadership as Chair of the All Islands Coral Reef Committee since 1999 and has now completed his final term as chair, although he will remain as the POC representing American Samoa. Under his leadership the Committee has adopted and implemented several action strategies, including the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force's Local Action Strategies and the AIC's Strategic Action Plan (2008-13) and Charter. Lelei has provided outstanding contributions to the protection and conservation of coral reef ecosystems in American Samoa and elsewhere, and to our understanding of the management of these threatened marine resources. Lelei's consistent leadership over nine years has contributed to more effective policy and management of coral reef ecosystems and increased public awareness of the key issues. Working with colleagues in the Pacific and the Caribbean, he has created a strong foundation upon which others can build. Lelei has consistently emphasized the need for members to work closely together with key federal, national, and international partners to strengthen the conservation of coral reefs and the need to focus on threats to coral reefs, such as climate change. In addition, Lelei has been a valuable member of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee which produced the national Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas.

## **U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Outstanding Management:**

### **American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group**

The United States Coral Reef Task Force recognizes and commends the American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG) for its diligence and leadership in protecting the spectacular coral reefs of American Samoa. CRAG, established in 1997, serves as a nation-wide model and provides scientific advice to the Governor of American Samoa to ensure the well-being of the coral reef ecosystem. All of this was accomplished through the dedicated hard work of the staff of the American Samoa Department of Commerce, Faleseu Eliu Paopao, Director, the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, Ray Tulafono, Director, the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, Toafa F.T. Vaiagae Ph.D., Director, the American Samoa Community College, Adelle Satele-Galea'i, President, and the National Park of American Samoa, Roger Moder, Superintendent. We also congratulate CRAG for establishing the American Samoa Marine Protected Area Network Program that will improve efforts to protect and manage our coral reef ecosystem through utilizing local and regional coordination and by incorporating traditional knowledge and management practices.

Roger Moder and Paul Brown were given special recognition for their support and assistance with the establishment of the Aua Geodetic Mark by NOAA National Geodetic Survey to signify the second oldest monitoring transect in the Pacific.

## **2007 American Samoa Community Stewardship Awards:**

### **Dr. Karolyn Braun, Marine Science Teacher, American Samoa Community College**

Dr. Braun has inspired many college students to pursue interest in Marine Science and to continue taking up the challenges in the field of Science for a career. Many of her students have been accepted to various Marine and Fisheries Science Programs off-island and she helped sustain the participation of her students by having grants available to support their efforts. She collaborates with various government resource people to help promote education and awareness activities in resource management and conservation.

### **Tavita Togia, Terrestrial Biologist, National Park Service of American Samoa**

Tavita not only recognized the seriousness of this environmental threat, but he and his crews have been very active in doing something about it. To date, they have killed over 2,000 large seed-bearing tamaligi trees from the National Park and Fagasa Village areas. By necessity, Tavita has had to be innovative in finding sources of funding over the years to keep hammering away at the distribution of the tamaligi. Tavita and his crews have reclaimed approximately 1,000 acres of rainforest on Tutuila Island (see photo showing abundance of dead brown tamaligi trees in rainforest in Fagasa). While the work needed is far from over, Tavita's dedication to protecting American Samoa's rainforests, and his personal "hands-on" involvement in doing the work, have kept this project moving.

### **Ivoga Ballard and Rodney, Farm Producers**

In 2001 Ivoga was interested in building a pig pen near her home and away from the stream. At the suggestion of NRCS they built a portable pig pen for their 2 pigs. This was the first portable pig pen on the island. Ivoga could have built a cement pig pen and used a wash-down system, but she recognized that this would have still been a pollution source to the nearby stream. Ivoga and Rodney have been willing to use their pens as a demonstration site for others to see and learn from. The main reason for them adopting the portable pen is their concern over the adjacent stream. Ivoga has been active removing trash from the stream and complaining against those that dump trash in the stream. She has also asked for assistance with protecting the stream bank from erosion.

### **Dr. Peter Craig, Marine Ecologist, National Park Service of American Samoa**

Dr. Peter Craig has worked to protect and preserve coral reefs in American Samoa. Peter Craig goes above and beyond what is required of him and has made a lasting difference in American Samoa. As a CRAG member, the incumbent periodically provides technical review regarding the Governor's speeches to the Coral Reef Task Force. Also through CRAG, he provided the idea and technical justification for the Governor's Executive Order (EO 005-2003) to designate all territorial waters as a marine mammal and sea turtle sanctuary; as well as making a presentation regarding a technical overview about climate change impacts in American Samoa to the Governor and his CRAG agency directors.