

## Land Preservation in Hawai'i Symposium held January 12, 2012

*Jean Brokish, O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council*

When you gather 120 conservation and land use professionals, community groups, and landowners together to learn about land preservation tools available in Hawai'i you're bound to discover something wonderful.



*Dale Bonar, Executive Director of the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, explains how local land trusts work with landowners and communities to preserve important lands.*

The O'ahu Resource Conservation and Development Council hosted a statewide symposium at McCoy Pavilion in Honolulu on January 12 that brought together experts in the conservation and preservation fields, including land use planners, attorneys, local land trusts, government agencies, community leaders and farmers.

“When people hear the term preservation, many imagine a fence to keep people out,” according to Jean Brokish, Executive Director of O'ahu RC&D. “That is definitely not the approach advocated at the symposium.”

Presentations throughout the day emphasized actions taken by communities and landowners to limit poorly planned development by taking steps towards a sustainable future by preserving agricultural lands and keeping them available for farming... conserving a forest for watershed health... protecting a wetland or coastline for biodiversity ... or saving a cultural site so future generations can learn from the past.

Information was provided on ways communities can incorporate conservation into their land use plans, legal aspects of conservation easements – a tool that allows for the perpetual protection of private property, and a summary of federal, state and county funding sources available for land acquisition.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was a landowner panel, where attendees heard first-hand from farmers and community leaders who had made the commitment to preserve land for the betterment of Hawai'i.



The symposium concluded with an oli entitled “E Ola Mau Ho'ola 'Āina” that reminds us that the persistence of life on earth is the persistence of humans as part of that earth.

*Kip Dunbar shared his reasons for placing a conservation easement on Kainalu Ranch (Moloka'i) during the landowner panel. Other landowners participating in the panel included Blake Vance, Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center; Elizabeth Reilly, Livable Hawai'i Kai Hui; and Greg Pietsch, Sunset Ranch.*

Many of the presentations and resources distributed at the symposium will soon be available on O'ahu RC&D's website: <http://www.oahurcd.org/preservation-resources/>

*Article content is the sole responsibility of the author. For more information about this article, contact Jean Brokish, email: [jean.brokish@oahurcd.org](mailto:jean.brokish@oahurcd.org).*



*Jean Brokish (at podium) moderated a session with representatives from local land trusts.*

*From left to right:  
Lea Hong, Trust for Public Land;  
Butch Haase, Molokai Land Trust;  
Doug Cole, North Shore Community Land Trust;  
Dale Bonar, Hawaiian Islands Land Trust; and  
John Henshaw, The Nature Conservancy.*