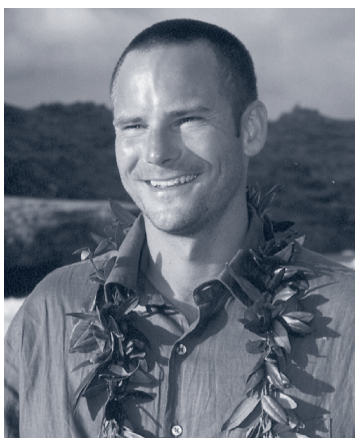


Extension View

Extension Agents Serving Hawai'i's Coastal Communities

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program connects research and outreach, delivering the most up-to-date information to our island communities. Our scientists study pressing local issues and produce real results, then our extension faculty translates that research into useful information for a myriad of audiences. This column regularly highlights the important work done by our extension faculty on your behalf.



In the Summer of 2005, Chris Conger responded to a job announcement in the Honolulu Advertiser that seemed too good to be true. The University of Hawai'i Sea

Grant College Program (UH Sea Grant), the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS), and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) collaborated in creating the State of Hawai'i's first Shoreline Specialist position. Administered by UH Sea Grant with support from the State of Hawai'i, this position would require the candidates to possess a record of excellence in the field of coastal geology and, importantly, have an affinity for and practical knowledge of Hawai'i's unique beaches and shorelines. Not only would this position entail consultation with various state agencies, planning departments, and private citizens, it would require extensive research in the field.

As an avid participant in water and beach activities including experience as a commercial and second class navy diver, Conger was uniquely qualified to fill this position. He graduated from the University of Hawai'i (UH) where he earned both his master's and bachelor's degrees in geology with a specialization in coastal geology. During his

time at UH, he was an active member of the Coastal Geology Group and addressed such issues as shoreline erosion, coral reef change, beach change, and sediment distribution. This directed work, as well as his research projects, allowed him to hone the skills and management practices essential to succeeding in the position. Based in the DLNR's Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands in Honolulu, Conger works closely with the DAGS State Survey Office and the surveyor community to provide recommendations on the proper placement of the shoreline boundary between public and private property. Conger also provides technical assistance in resolving problems regarding shoreline setback and development and in helping land-owners clean up large shoreline debris. Among other things, he reviews coastal land use proposals, emergency erosion control requests, and provides assistance in the interpretation of coastal zone statutes and rules from a science based perspective.

A critical component of this work is to educate and connect with private and commercial land managers, developers, real estate agents, and private citizens, so among Conger's many other tasks, he conducts statewide workshops with other members of the UH Sea Grant team and participates in numerous outreach activities aimed at educating the community on a wide range of coastline issues. After several years of serving as a UH Sea Grant Shoreline Specialist, if you can catch up with him, he still contends that the job is too good to be true.