

Vetiver Highlights #11 – The Pacific Islands and more

Google Earth continues to amaze me. Recently I found natural terraces formed from Vetiver plantings in Fiji in the 1950s. 17°22'52.50"S 178°15'5.59"E (John Greenfield's old stamping ground).



Looking for old vetiver hedgerows in the Pacific Islands raises both the need and interest in bringing more focus on mitigating increased erosion and declining fresh water groundwater on many low lying Pacific Islands.



The image above shows a sediment fan from a catchment of no more than about 4 square miles effecting the coastal waters of Oahu's (Hawaii) windward shore. Most of the sediment is from point source erosion sites such as market gardens, overgrazed farm land, and recreational land terrain vehicles. Mary Wilkowski is setting up a Vetiver Systems company in Hawaii (<http://www.vetiversystems.com/index.html>) to deal with these sorts of problems. Athena Pratt Soil Conservationist USDA-NRCS. Pago Pago, American Samoa (Athena.Pratt@pb.usda.gov) is working very successfully with a farmer orientated vetiver based soil conservation program.

In the last few months there appears to be a spurt of vetiver activity in various parts of the world. In China, the China Vetiver Network (Liyu Xu coordinator) by EED/Germany has started implementing the "Vetiver and Agroforestry Technology for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Natural Resource Protection in Minority Mountains of Guangxi Province". The project will help local farmers develop nearly 50,000 economic trees, 40 mini-irrigation systems and will be plant over 3 million vetiver tillers to conserve nature resources and provide farmers with multiple products and materials. (contact: vetiver@jlonline.com).

Liyu Xu shared some images of a highway embankment near Nanjing that was protected with vetiver in 2004. Three years later (2007), vetiver is very well established, the slope is stable, and native plants are establishing naturally. Liyu reports that the only maintenance required is an annual cutting – the local communities readily do this since they use the grass for fuel and other purposes.





We heard from Ben Mitai (mailto:benj_mitai@aprilasia.com), Forestry Training & Development Head for PT RAPP, a pulp & paper company in Riau province, Sumatera that the Vetiver System will be a key component of their training program for stabilization of roadside, roadside cuttings, culvert & bridge entrance/exits to rehabilitate eroded, damaged and degraded areas, reduce siltation and improve water retention, prevent future erosion/soil loss, etc. David Booth, coordinator of the Indonesian Vetiver Network (info@eastbalipovertyproject.org) is supporting this initiative.

New vetiver networks are being established in south India (prakashgopinath@gmail.com) where there is an increased interest in VS, and in Morocco following a successful workshop there last November (cjuliard@mtds.com). In Kenya James Orwino (Edgerton University) is working with farmers in Nyanza and Taita/Voi areas to introduce VS for soil conservation and river bank stabilization (joowin@yahoo.com). These are just a few of the many vetiver initiatives taking place around the world.

The Vetiver Network (International) has been busy. We have now given specific responsibilities to some of our directors. Paul Truong located in Queensland (truong@uqconnect.net) is responsible for Asia, Dale Rachmeler (TVNI's president) located in Ghana – Sub-Sahara Africa (drachmeler@busac.org), Criss Juliard located in Morocco – Mediterranean and north Africa (cjuliard@mtds.com), and Jim Smyle (located in Texas) – the Americas (millersmyle@earthlink.net). We have established another picture gallery – Vetiver Clients – comprising all the different applications of VS in shortened power point presentation style (<http://picasaweb.google.com/VetiverClients>) and are starting to work on a country picture gallery.

(<http://picasaweb.google.com/VETIVERCOUNTRIES>). We have established a blog site at: <http://vetivernetinternational.blogspot.com/>

An excellent new 140 page manual with color images that cover all the major applications of vetiver – “*Vetiver System Applications - Technical Reference Manual*” by *Paul Truong, Tran Tan Van and Elise Pinnars* is being published in Vietnamese, and will shortly be available online in English. We are having it translated into Mandarin, Spanish and French, and are looking for funds to print the translations in hard copy.

Dick Grimshaw. Bellingham April 18 2007