



AgriBusiness Development Corporation Newsletter

August 2024

ADC's Wahiawā Irrigation System Efforts Featured



Chairperson Lyle Tabata's editorial -- a look at ADC's efforts to revitalize O'ahu's Wahiawā Irrigation System -- was published in the Star-Advertiser this month. Read the piece [online here](#) or below:

Over the last year, AgriBusiness Development Corporation (ADC) has developed an aggressive, dynamic approach to address multiple challenges facing Hawai'i's infrastructure, food production, and vacant lands.

The restoration of the Wahiawā Irrigation System (WIS), part of ADC's state-wide irrigation infrastructure and water sustainability efforts, fulfills ADC's statute: to grow more local food, to develop an agricultural export business, and to be an aggressive and dynamic leader in agriculture for Hawai'i. WIS is a shared initiative between ADC, Hawai'i's Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture.

(continued)

For ADC, the rehabilitation of the WIS isn't just a farmer's "field of dreams": the project aims to achieve the USDA's goal of a 40% increase of agricultural output, with a 50% cut on environmental impacts, by 2050, while prioritizing safety and sustainability. The project also plans to incorporate hydropower energy solutions, the enhancement of wetlands and the Wahiawā Reservoir, and efforts to increase soil fertility and crop productivity through fertilizer offsets.

WIS is an important project that requires complex planning, budgeting, staffing, and implementation. The multi-phase water sustainability project is a cost-effective plan to augment water supply, address climate change and drought risks, and prioritize safety of the land, while preventing billions of gallons of wastewater pollution into our oceans.

ADC's Board represents farming, agriculture, economic development, business, government and engineering backgrounds with decades of combined, hands-on experience representing all of our Islands. ADC is now better equipped than ever before to move forward towards our plans and achieve our goals, and our work in Wahiawā is a testament to our shared vision and commitment. WIS looks at impact: this project makes a global, environmental, food systems, and financial impact. We are motivated, on-the-move, and meeting face-to-face with the people we serve.



“No water? No food. This is not just about food security, but about water security. This is about taking bold steps forward, doing our due diligence, and using our best resources and talent to invest in Hawai‘i for the next 200 years.”
-ADC Executive Director Wendy Gady

From our field studies, we know that nearly 80% of the farmers who benefit from the project are not even ADC tenants – a testament to ADC's awareness that collective land stewardship is the only way forward.

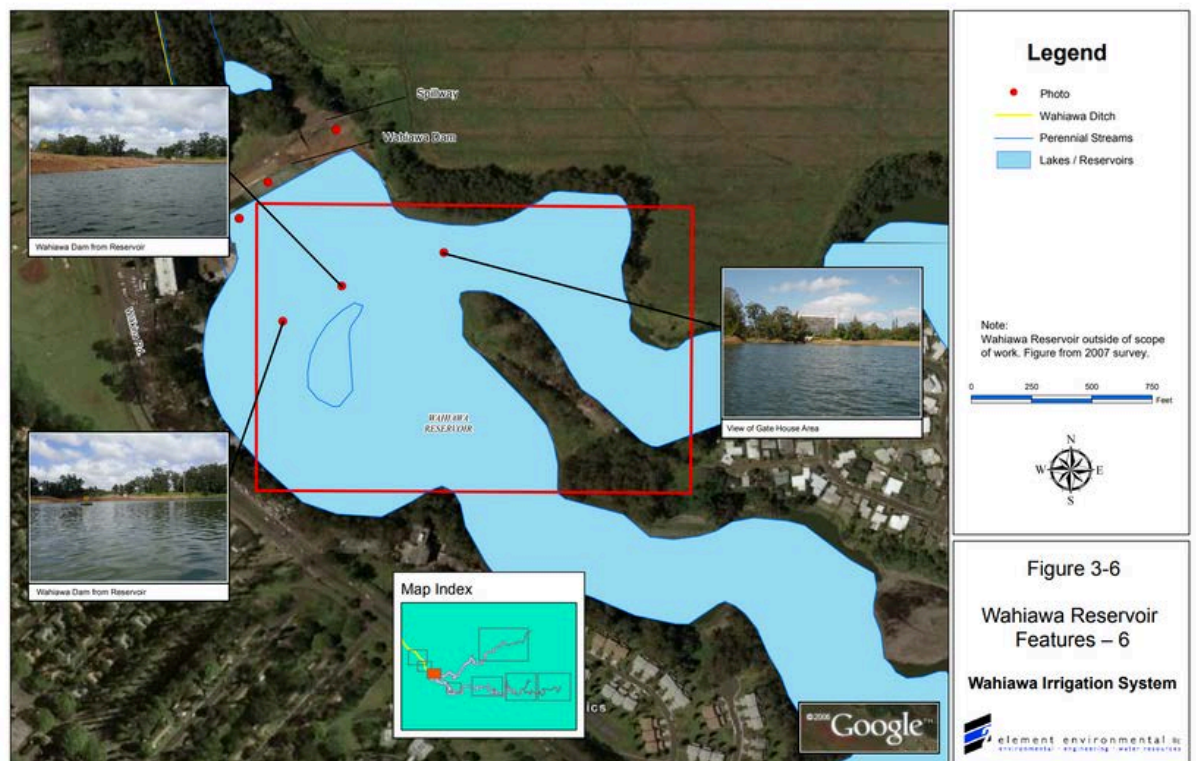
With thousands of acres of unused but arable land across O'ahu and our Islands, ADC has the resources, talent, funding, and support to keep our lands safe and thriving, in perpetuity. In Wahiawā, we know how to build our agriculture and aquaculture infrastructure to feed, house, and employ in a scalable way.

This is not just about us, but the safety and health of our children, and our grandchildren. ADC leads the way forward with a proactive approach to face the biggest agricultural challenges ahead: drought, wildfires, food scarcity, and infrastructure deterioration.

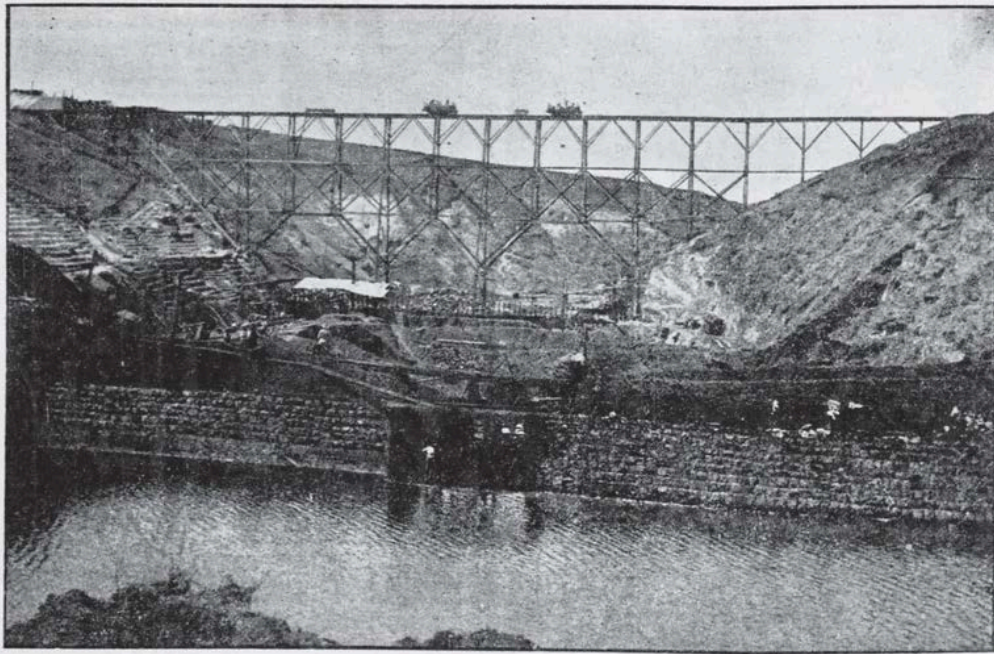
The Importance of Wahiawā's Irrigation System



(Above) While it may not look like much, the Wahiawā Dam is integral to food production in Wahiawā.



(Above) The Wahiawā Reservoir is one part of a multi-phase project to jumpstart local agriculture production on O'ahu.



THE WAHLAWA DAM IN PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION. LOOKING DOWN THE VALLEY AND SHOWING ROCK PROTECTION AT THE FOOT OF THE EARTH FILL, WHICH EXTENDS 500 FEET TO THE RAILROAD TRESTLE.

(Above) A historic photo, dated 1906, of the Wahiawā Dam in construction, courtesy of Pacific Commercial Advertiser.

More About AgriBusiness Development Corporation



The AgriBusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) is a state agency created in 1994 by the Hawai‘i State Legislature and is administratively attached to the Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Its mission is to conserve and convert arable lands and their associated infrastructure that were formerly large mono-crop plantation lands into new, productive uses. The agency’s ultimate goal is to ensure that agricultural production and agribusiness ventures will be responsive to the current food and other agricultural needs of the state of Hawai‘i.