



American Samoa Government
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
PR.001-06022026

PRESS RELEASE

June 2, 2026

American Samoa Department of Commerce Celebrates Our Wetlands Champions

UTULEI, American Samoa - The American Samoa Department of Commerce's Wetlands Program hosted an inspiring Wetlands Appreciation and Recognition Event on the evening of May 29th, bringing together government leaders, community partners, educators, students, and environmental advocates to honor those dedicated to protecting and preserving American Samoa's wetlands.

The evening began with an opening prayer by Rev. Faletoi Afoa, who reminded attendees that "we humans are caretakers of God's creations," a message that perfectly reflected the spirit of this year's theme. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Grace Felise and Aukusitino Mao on behalf of the Department of Commerce, emphasizing the importance of wetlands conservation, public awareness, and recognizing the individuals and organizations serving as Wetlands Champions.

Guests were treated to a video presentation centered on this year's theme, "*Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage*," highlighting the vital role wetlands play in protecting our shores, supporting wildlife, preserving cultural traditions, and sustaining resources that generations have relied upon. As the presentation emphasized, these lands hold our history and remind us that every action taken today helps shape a sustainable future for generations to come.

The event also showcased student involvement through cultural performances from Tula, Aoa, and Malaeloa—villages known for their flourishing wetlands. Preservation partners, community advocates, and environmental organizations were recognized for their continued commitment to conservation efforts throughout the Territory.

Special recognition was given to individuals who have become strong voices for wetlands preservation. Each recipient received a commemorative plaque and a canvas illustrating the



locations of wetlands across American Samoa, symbolizing the community's appreciation for their dedication to environmental stewardship.

In his keynote address, Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula congratulated the award recipients and thanked all those involved in wetlands preservation. He emphasized that wetlands are more than places on a map—they are living landscapes that provide food, protection, cultural identity, and hope. He praised the collective efforts of agencies and communities working to educate, advocate, restore, and serve in the stewardship of American Samoa's natural resources.

Guest speaker Mrs. Claire Bacus-DeWees, a Science Teacher from Tafuna High School, shared her personal journey as an environmental advocate. She reflected on a beach cleanup where her students took the initiative to champion environmental responsibility, inspiring her own commitment to conservation and demonstrating the powerful role youth play in shaping a more sustainable future.

The program concluded with remarks from DOC Director Ali'imuaamua Magdalene Petaia, who expressed gratitude to the many agencies, organizations, and community partners whose collaboration continues to strengthen environmental preservation efforts throughout the Territory.

Congratulations to all of this year's Wetlands Champions. Your dedication and service are making a lasting impact across our islands and ensuring that these treasured ecosystems remain protected for future generations.

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OUR CONTACT

www.americansamoa.gov
comms@go.as.gov

Office of the Governor
Fagatogo, AS 96799



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OFISA O LE KOVANA
PR.001-06022026

TUSITUSIGA FA'ALAU'ITELE

Iuni 2, 2026

Fa'atautaia e le Matagaluega o Fefa'ataua'iga le Fa'amanatuga o Ele'ele Susū

UTULEI, Amerika Samoa - Na fa'atautaia e le Matagaluega o Fefa'ataua'iga e ala i le porokalama o ele'ele susu se fa'amoemoe e fa'afetaia ma aloa'ia ai ele'ele susu, i le afiafi o le masina o Me 29, na auai fa'atasi ai ta'ita'i o le Malo, faipa'aga o le atunu'u, faia'oga, tamaiti a'oga, ma e lagolago mo le si'osi'omaga e fa'amamalu i latou o lo'o ofo atu atoa le soifua i le puipuiga, ma le fa'atumauina o ele'ele susu o Amerika Samoa.

Na amatalia le fa'amoemoe e ala i le tatalo na saunia e le Faife'au ia Faletoi Afoa, sa ia fa'amanatuina i e uma na auai, "O tatou tagata ola o tausimea o le foafoaga a le Atua," o se fe'au na atagia lelei ai le agaga o le manulauti o lenei tausaga. O le na saunoa fa'afeiloa'i e fai ma sui o le Matagaluega o Fefa'ataua'iga, o le susuga ia Grace Felise ma Aukusitino Mao. Na fa'amamafaina le taua o le puipuiga o le ele'ele susu, nofo sauni o le lautele, ma aloa'ia i tagata patino ma fa'apotopotoga ua avea ma siamupini o ele'ele susu.

Na saunia se ata fa'asolo vave i le aofia, ma na fitoitonu i le manulauti o lenei tausaga, "Ele'ele Susu ma Tomai Masani: Fa'amanatuina o le Tofi Fa'ale-Aganu'u", fa'ailogaina ai le matafaioi taua o ele'ele susu i le puipuiga o tatou matafaga, lagolagoina o si'omaga o manu, fa'asao ia tu ma aga fa'ale-aganu'u, ma fa'atumauina puna'oa na fa'amoemoe ai augatupulaga. A o fa'amamafaina lenei mata'upu, o nei fanuia o lo'o taofia tatou talafa'asolopito ma fa'amanatu mai ia te i tatou, o gaoioiga uma e faia nei, e fesoasoani i le fa'atulagaina o se faiga tumau o le lumana'i mo augatupulaga a sau.

Na fa'aalia fo'i e le fa'amoemoe le auai o fanau a'oga e ala i fa'afiafiaga fa'ale-aganu'u mai Tula, 'Aoa, ma Malaelo. O nu'u nei o lo'o iloga i le manuia o latou ele'ele susu. Sa aloa'ia Faigapa'aga mo le fa'atumauina, 'au faufautua o le atunu'u, ma fa'apotopotoga o le si'osi'omaga aua latou tautoga i le puipuiga, o lo latou sao lea i le Teritori atoa.

Fa'alauiloga fa'apitoa na tu'uina atu ia i latou ua avea ma leo malosi mo le fa'atumauina o ele'ele susu. Laugatasia uma i latou ta'ito'atasi ma papa fa'amanatuga ma se ata tusitusia e fa'aailoa mai ai nofoaga o ele'ele susu i Amerika Samoa, fa'ailogaina ai le agaga fa'afetai o le atunu'u mo latou soifua tu'uina atu atoa e fai ma tausimea o le si'osi'omaga.



I le malelega a le ali'i Kovana ia Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula, sa ia fa'amalo ia i latou na taua'ao fa'ailoga aloa'ia, ma fa'afetaia i latou uma o lo'o auai i le fa'atumauina o ele'ele susu. Sa ia fa'amamafa e fa'apea, o 'ele'ele susu e le na'o se nofoaga o i le fa'afanua— o nofoaga o laufanua olaola e maua ai mea taumafa, puipuiga, fa'asinomaga fa'ale-aganu'u, ma le fa'amoemoe. Sa ia fa'afetaia le sao o ofisa ma le atunu'u i le galulue e a'oa'o, fautua, fa'afo'isia, ma auaua e ala i le tausimea i puna'oa fa'ale-natura a Amerika Samoa.

O le to'oto'o na a'ami o le Susuga ia Claire Bacus-DeWees, o se faia'oga Saienisi mai le A'oga tulaga muamua o Tafuna, na ia fa'asoia i lona savaliga fa'ale-tagata fautua mo le si'osi'omaga. Sa ia tomanatu i le fa'amamaina o le matafaga, na faia e ana tamaiti a'oga le taumafaiga e siamupini i tiute o le si'osi'omaga, fa'aosofia lona ia ta'utinoga i le puipuiga, ma le faiga malosi o matafaioi o tupulaga i le e fa'atulaga se lumana'i tumau.

Na fa'ai'uina le porokalama i upu mai le Tama'ita'i Fa'atonu o le DOC ia Ali'imuumua Magdalene Petaia, na fa'aalia lona agaga fa'afetai i ofisa, fa'apotopotoga, ma pa'aga o i le atunu'u, o e na galulue fa'atasi e fa'aauau le fa'amalosia o le sao i le fa'atumauina o le si'osi'omaga i le Teritori atoa.

Fa'amalo atu i e uma na siamupini i lenei tausaga i ele'ele susu. O lou ola ofoina atoa ma le tautua ua avea ma se a'afiaga umi i o tatou atumout, ma ia mautinoa o lo'o puipuia pea nei si'osi'omaga taua mo tupulaga o le lumana'i.

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