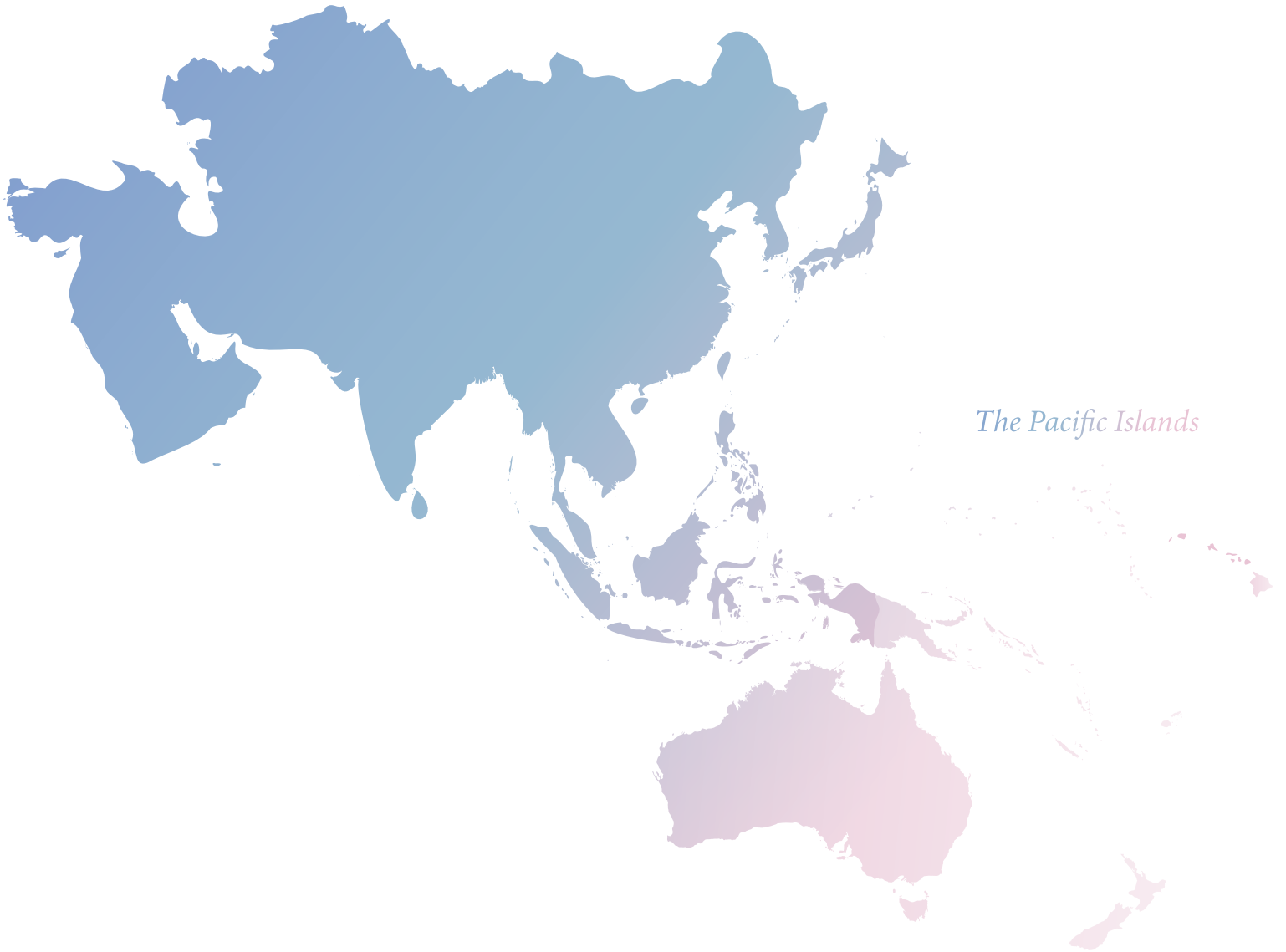


# MAY 2021



*The Pacific Islands*

## AANHPI HERITAGE MONTH



FAPAC-DOI Newsletter



# *In this issue*

## Contributors

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# *From the president*

Dear Chapter Members:

This year’s Asian American Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month has been a whirlwind of celebrations, healing conversations, storytelling, and continued progress toward change. May 2020 and May 2021 will forever be bookends to what has been an indelible year of navigating unprecedented challenges, personal growth, and a growing community of friendship and support. I am so grateful for the connections we have made. Thank you for all you do to make FAPAC-DOI and our workforce a more meaningful and supportive place. I am grateful for you!

Stay well,



Lena Chang  
President, FAPAC-DOI



# Member spotlight

## Christine Ogura

Deputy Regional Chief

USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System

An unconventional journey is what led me to join the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 2010. Born to Japanese immigrant parents who made their home in Hawaii, I hiked and enjoyed the outdoors, but never knew it could become a career until much later in life. Growing up in an era where environmental education was not part of the school system and with Japanese parents who were not familiar with conservation, it wasn't until I worked for U.S. Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink in Washington D.C. that I learned of all the endangered species in Hawaii. This led me to abandon my initial career path in international relations to pursue conservation. I have worked for non-profits acquiring lands for the National Park Service and supporting international conservation efforts in over 10 countries, and for state government developing public-private watershed partnerships.



So what eventually led me to the USFWS? It's not the answer you would expect. I never would have guessed a national financial meltdown from a mortgage crisis would have led me to the best career decision I ever made. My program funding dried up when the financial crisis hit, which led me to apply to the USFWS. Since then, I have worked for different programs (National Wildlife Refuge System and Ecological Services) and at all levels of the agency, starting in Honolulu where I was a planner and coordinator, then as the Deputy Project Leader at the Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges Complex, then as the Refuge System's Chief of Staff at Headquarters, and now as the Deputy Regional Chief for the Refuge System in our regional office in Portland, Oregon. I have also found a way to continue my international work through the Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program where I advised the government of Cambodia on environmental laws.

Through my evolving career, what I most enjoy about my work is supporting the incredible people of the USFWS as well as mentoring interns, students, and fellows.

When I started, the mission of the USFWS really called to my passion for conservation and my value of appreciating different viewpoints and working collaboratively with others. Now, over 10 years later,

what keeps me with the USFWS is not just its mission, but its people. I have learned over my years that we have the most talented and dedicated people. They inspire me every day to do my best and to be my best for them. I am extremely lucky and grateful to be able to work together with the people I do and call them family.

What also brings joy to my life is learning, exploring, and creating. I enjoy traveling, hiking, sketching, basketry, and am a “lives to eat” food enthusiast. I hope to one day travel the country eating my way through every state’s food festivals - and to visit as many national wildlife refuges along the way.

Reflecting on my over 25 years in conservation, I’m often asked what advice I have for the next generation of conservationists. I share that we are all part of an enduring legacy with the work we do every day on behalf of the American people. There is a boardwalk at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, the first refuge established in 1903, that has a plank for every refuge in the Refuge System. It’s really inspiring to walk it and to see the year each refuge was established and to know that I am a part of this incredible 118 year history. To the next generation, you are all part of that next plank that will be added to conserve these special places into the next 118 years and beyond. Be in awe of this.

The other advice that I share is to be open to the unexpected. My journey has been one of twists and turns and a meandering path, but it all led me to where I am today. And it’s the people along the way I give my heartfelt thanks to. The work we do is so meaningful and important, but what truly matters is our people. As Maya Angelou said, “people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” So remember - be the reason that someone smiles today.



*Volunteer work day at butterfly garden,  
Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge*



# Pacific Islander heritage & navigation



*Mau Piailug (holding pointer) teaching  
(Low, Vineyard Gazette, 2016)*

Mau Piailug (1932-2010) from Satawal, in the Caroline Islands, today part of the Federated States of Micronesia was a skilled navigator in the once-prominent Pacific Island art of traveling by canoe across the ocean without modern instruments. He learned skills passed down by Master Navigators who observed and “read” waves, stars, weather, and marine life to navigate from island to island in the Pacific Ocean long before the use of ships and planes.

In May 2000, the Smithsonian recognized Piailug as “one of the most important influences in the resurgence of cultural pride in the Pacific” ([Krauss, PIR, 2000](#)). [Papa Mau: The Wayfinder](#), tells the story about how he taught a team in Hawai’i who sought to revive their lost traditions. Together they would build a double-hulled Polynesian canoe, the Hokule’a, and in 1976, Mau would lead them as they sailed thousands of miles from Hawai’i to Tahiti, accomplishing a feat few thought possible.



*An artist's rendering of the Hokule'a  
Image: Herb Kane, Bishop Museum, Hawaii*

Across the Micronesia region, one can still see different representations of an ancient navigating history. The Marshall Islands have stick chart handicrafts, with wood and shells representing currents and waves. They also tell ancient legends of racing canoes to choose kings. Today, the [Waan Aelōñ in Majel program](#) uses the canoe to revive and teach ancient life-sustaining skills to Marshallese youth.



*Stick chart, canoe, and Marshall Islands flag on postal stamp  
Image: National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution*

In the islands of Palau, traditional wooden storyboards are carved to remember ancient legends. The storyboard below features Yapese navigators who traveled by canoe to Palau to quarry limestone and acquire the stone disks for which the island of Yap is well known. The risky 250-mile journey across the open ocean cost lives leaving stones at the bottom of the ocean until today.



*Palau story board with Yapese navigators  
Image: British Museum*

Mau Piailug left a legacy in Native Hawai'iian [Master Navigator Nainoa Thompson](#), who traveled around the world in the [Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage](#) from 2013 to 2019, to share a message of caring for the earth and sustainable living. A community-based organization in Yap called [Wa'agey](#), also inspired by Mau, teaches canoe carving and traditional navigation among other traditional skills.



*Chamoru warriors and Spanish explorers on Guam in the 1500's  
Image: @GuamPedia*

In the Northern Mariana Islands, interest in navigation and sailing is on the rise. In [Navigating Cultures, Seafaring Returns to the CNMI](#), a Northern Marianas Humanities Council video, witness different groups collaborating with descendants of Mau Piailug and other Carolinian Master Navigators, to revive the once-strong tradition of sailing among the Chamoru who would sail out to meet Western ships as they began arriving in the 1500s. Mau Piailug's dream to perpetuate the Pacific Island heritage of navigating is alive and continues to inspire.

*By Tanya Harris Joshua, Deputy Policy Director and Communications Lead, Office of Insular Affairs, May 19, 2021.*

# AANHPI event highlights



On May 11, Lena Chang moderated a roundtable discussion among USFWS employees and FAPAC-DOI chapter members for the USFWS AAPI Heritage Month Event. This event focused on advancing leaders and was composed of two panels: one of emerging leaders and one of experienced leaders. They shared their stories, their insight on fostering a welcoming and inclusive work environment, and why representation matters. Lena was joined by:

**Narrissa Brown** – Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Oahu, Hawaii

**Henry Chang** – Chief, Policy, Economics, Risk Management, and Analytics, JAO, Hadley, MA

**Philip Lu** – Recent DFP/Biologist-Training Specialist, National Conservation Training Center, WV

**Christine Ogura** – Deputy Regional Chief, Refuges, Portland, OR

**Guneet Sampat** – Systems Project Management Specialist, Headquarters, Falls Church, VA

**Rylan Suehisa** – Internal Communications, External Affairs, Portland, OR

The recording of the event can be viewed [here](#).



On May 18, our chapter cohosted an AANHPI Heritage Month Event in partnership with the Department of Energy Bonneville Power Administration and DOI bureaus: BLM, BOR, OSMRE, and USFWS. This year, we were honored to welcome back Dr. Russell Jeung, Professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University and cofounder of [Stop AAPI Hate](#), which tracks COVID-19 related discrimination in order to develop community resources and policy interventions to fight racism.

We first learned about Dr. Jeung’s work last year; as we were adjusting to the new world of a global pandemic, we were also learning that as coronavirus fears increased, so did accounts of bullying, discrimination, and racism toward people in the AAPI community. We learned about Stop AAPI Hate’s reporting system that documented these incidents, and in May 2020, we invited Dr.

Jeung to speak at an event very much like this year’s. Back then, we were shocked and saddened to hear about the 1,700 incidents that Stop AAPI Hate had recorded in those early months. One year later, we have sadly seen much worse. However, because of this robust reporting and data collection, Stop AAPI Hate’s reports have been cited widely from news outlets to congress – as a driving force for change.

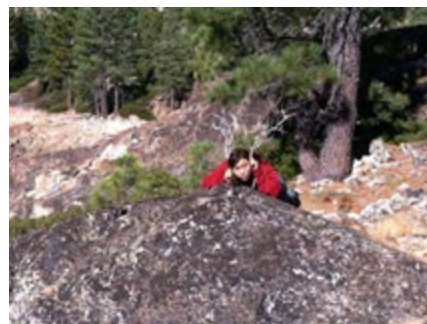
Discussions of racism are painful and difficult, but in increasing awareness of these incidents, we hope that we can come away with renewed awareness and continued energy toward progress. We are so grateful that Dr. Jeung again accepted our invitation to share about his important work. Dr. Jeung discussed that in times of fear and adversity – people often go into a response of fight or flight; but, there is also another way we can respond – we can flock – together in community and support. Thank you for sharing your insight and “flocking” with us, Dr. Jeung!

# Memory & photo gallery



“ Every summer my mom and I would join our neighborhood’s Obon festival to welcome our ancestors back. It was always a big community event with traditional Japanese music, dancing and foods.

- **Christine Ogura, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**



“ My most treasured childhood memories occur during my family’s summer trips to the Sierras. In a remote location with limited technology, we would lose track of time and create imaginary games inspired by nature. My dad, always with the latest camera technology in hand, would enthusiastically document the over-looked and delicate elements of nature - from the golden spider nestled in a flower’s crevices to unique ice crystals near a trickling stream. My mom taught us how to slowly soak up nature, either with a paintbrush, through meditation, or by floating in the lake and listening to the sounds under the water. We didn’t know the names of the insects, flowers, or birds we admired, but that wasn’t really the point at the time. As much as I miss these moments, they are a good reminder to seek out my own special place as an adult.

- **Karen Sinclair, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Want to read more stories like these? Stephen Carlisle and his team put together this beautiful edition of [Connections](#) for this year’s AANHPI Heritage Month, which features numerous FAPAC-DOI members. Thank you for your contributions!**



# Member resources

## What we're watching

[Shadow and Bone:](#)  
star Jessie Mei Li on why it's important Alina is mixed-race

[Always Be My Maybe](#)

[Late Night with Seth Meyers:](#)  
Secretary Haaland on being the first Native American Secretary in the U.S. Cabinet

Baseball movies:

<a href="#">Fever Pitch</a>	<a href="#">Moneyball</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Field of Dreams</a>	<a href="#">The Sandlot</a>	

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion

[Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage:](#)  
U.S. National Park Service

[20 Suffragists To Know for 2020:](#)  
U.S. National Park Service

[Vice Pres. Harris' encouragement to Asian Americans](#)

[The Chinese Exclusion Act:](#)  
NPR One

[Biden signs Hate Crimes Bill amid attacks on Asian Americans](#)

[Remarks by Pres. Biden at signing of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act](#)

[Readout of White House Meeting with Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Leaders](#)

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Become a member of FAPAC national at [fapac.org/Membership](https://fapac.org/Membership)