

# Parker Ranch: A Vision for Sustainable Energy Generation

Posted on Tue, November 04, 2014 by Carole Gaudet.



by Nell Achtmeyer T'16



A small group of Tuck students had the opportunity to meet with Neil "Dutch" Kuyper T'92, CEO of Parker Ranch, last Tuesday during lunch. As always, it was great to connect with fellow Tuck alumni from the other part of the country! Parker Ranch is the largest cattle ranch and second largest private land owner in Hawaii, located in the Waimea region of the Big Island.

The context of Kuyper's visit was around the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Ranch, specifically about how the high costs of electricity on the island threaten Parker Ranch's sustainability goals. His presentation focused on the launch of Paniolo (cowboy in Hawaiian) Power Company, LLC and how collaborative efforts to utilize the Ranch's natural resources in support of sustainable energy generation and distribution supports their mission to "support Hawaii Community Hospital, Hawaii Community Foundation, Hawaii Preparatory Academy, and Parker School Trust Corporation.

If Parker Ranch's plan is realized, it could successfully break the grip of the vertically integrated monopoly of Hawaii Electric Company, Inc. (HECO), the current utility, and the ranch might consider the possibility of becoming a regional utility of their own (understandably a daunting task). Discussions and public comments on the utility's recent "Power Supply Improvement Plan" are underway currently, the outcome of which will greatly impact the direction that Kuyper and Parker Ranch will take over the coming months. The future of HECO aside, Parker Ranch has engaged powerhouses Siemens and Booz Allen Hamilton as consultants to consider scenarios where the Ranch could serve as a model for establishing a microgrid on the Big Island. [note 2]

Parker Ranch has the fortune of having a passionate and forward thinking CEO who is successfully leveraging partnerships to support a socially driven mission. The nature of their trust and the beneficiaries that are connected to community health care and education naturally leads one to think about the three legs of sustainability: economy, equity and environment. While Kuyper's presentation focused on energy, Parker Ranch frames other sustainability goals through the lens of stewardship for water, wildlife, habitat, and community involvement. Parker Ranch considers the role of economic benefits and opportunities, connections to the community, and the environmental sustainability of each of these areas of stewardship. Eager first-year students looking to connect with Kuyper on a first-year project might look into visiting the 130,000 acres in Hawaii. Parker Ranch provides an example of a company that has become a true advocate for sustainability within their community and industry.

[note 1] <http://parkerranch.com/stewardship-education/trust/> (<http://parkerranch.com/stewardship-education/trust/>)

[note 2] <http://paniolopower.com/wp-content/uploads/Parker-Ranch-Case-Study.pdf> (<http://paniolopower.com/wp-content/uploads/Parker-Ranch-Case-Study.pdf>)

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