



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

WILLIAM J. AILA JR
CHAIRPERSON

For Immediate Release: November 1, 2012

**GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES FOREST PROTECTION FUNDING
AS EVENTS CELEBRATE ARBOR DAY IN HAWAI'I**

HONOLULU -- In acknowledgement of Friday, November 2 as Arbor Day in Hawai'i, Governor Neil Abercrombie today said, "I want everyone to remember that trees and forests are what make life possible here in Hawai'i, because they collect Hawai'i's water supply. Saving Hawai'i's forests means ensuring our water supply for future generations," he said.

More than half of Hawai'i's irreplaceable forests have been lost over time, and the remainder are threatened by expanding populations of invasive species, and prolonged periods of drought in some areas.

"In Hawai'i, much of our water supply is captured by trees' leaves and branches that gather moisture from the clouds," said William J. Aila, Jr. DLNR Chairperson. "Our most common native tree is the 'ohi'a, a word that means 'to gather.' The importance of forests for water has long been recognized – expressed in the ancient Hawaiian proverb '*Hahai no ka ua i ka ululā`au* - The rain follows the forest.'"

Forests also keep Hawai'i a paradise by providing a home for native plants and animals, and preventing erosion and runoff that harms coral reefs and nearshore marine ecosystems, beaches and fish populations.

To protect and preserve forest watershed areas and our water supply is the objective of the Department of Land and Natural Resources' (DLNR) "Rain follows the Forest" plan to double watershed protection efforts in the coming decades.

To fund the plan Governor Abercrombie announced that "This year, I have released \$2.5 million for capital improvement projects for forest protection projects. In addition, local jobs provided by these projects will allow communities to give back to the forests that sustain them."

Here are some of the projects prioritized to protect and restore critical watershed forests:

Island of Hawai‘i –

- Native mamane trees are being planted at a 5,200-acre restoration site on the northern slope of Mauna Kea. Nearly 50,000 trees have already been planted in the last 3 years with the help of a thriving volunteer program.
- Projects in remote forests of Kohala and Ka‘u will be funded that are critical to supply drinking and irrigation water for these regions. Comprehensive management actions will include invasive species control, construction of protective barriers, and restoration of native species, including several that are endangered. Public access will be maintained for recreational and gathering purposes. Pedestrian gates and step-overs will be provided along fence corridors to ease access in and out of the protected areas. DLNR and its partners have engaged hundreds of community organizations and individuals to plan and assist with these projects. This includes involving hunters to assist with initial animal removal and opening new accesses to adjacent forests.

On Maui --

- Three projects were selected to protect more than 11,000 acres on the north, east and south slopes of Haleakalā. On the south slope, more than 90% of the native koa forests have been lost to grazing from hooved animals such as goats, cattle, and deer. However, forests can re-grow in areas if protected from hooved animals, and aided by efforts to remove invasive plants.

On Kaua‘i --

- A project to protect more than 2,000 acres of remote watershed forests in the Alaka‘i wilderness will begin. Threats to this region include invasive plants such as ginger and Australian tree fern, and damage from feral pigs and goats. DLNR has reached out to more than a hundred Kaua‘i organizations and individuals for input on this project.

In addition to bringing the forest to the people, DLNR wants to bring the people to the forest. But that is not always simple, as many of these areas are landlocked or privately owned. To improve access, the Department has recently hired an access and acquisitions coordinator, to increase protection of Hawai‘i’s coastlines, forests and watersheds, and fulfill the department’s mandate to provide access and wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities to the people of Hawai‘i.

“As part of Governor Abercrombie’s New Day Plan to transform state government by increasing public access to these areas, this new coordinator will help Hawai‘i’s residents and visitors to better enjoy the outdoors and learn about the importance of conserving these unique environmental, cultural and historic areas in Hawai‘i,” Aila said.

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Images and video of forest watersheds and restoration projects are available at:
<https://plus.google.com/101613020396360217549?hl=en#photos/101613020396360217549/albums/5806034032246665809>

Arbor Day plant sales and giveaways planned:

Hawai‘i island: Arbor Day plant sale on Friday, November 2, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the DLNR **Hilo baseyard** at 19 E. Kawili St.; or at the **Kamuela nursery** at 66-1220A Lalamilo Road. Gardeners and landscapers can find popular native and non-native plants. For information call 974-4221.

Kaua'i: Arbor Day plant sale, on Friday, November 2, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the DLNR Pea Luke nursery at 4396D Pua Luke Road. Gardeners and landscapers can find popular native and non-native plants. For information call 274-3433.

Other Arbor Day events and plant giveaways go to:

<http://www.arbordayhawaii.org/events/>

For more information news media may contact:

Deborah Ward
DLNR Public Information Specialist
Phone: (808) 587-0320