



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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STATE WATER COMMISSION DECISION BALANCES COMPETING DEMANDS

HONOLULU – The State Water Commission issued a groundbreaking decision on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 in Paia, Maui in a flexible approach that meets most of the needs of competing water demands.

The Commission balanced competing demands for stream waters with the needs of the stream resources at 19 east Maui streams (Waikamoi, Alo, Wahinepee, Puohokamoa, Haipuaena, Punalau/Kolea, Honomanu, Nuaailua, Ohia, West Wailuaiki, East Wailuaiki, Kopiliula, Puakaa, Waiohue, Paakea, Waiaaka, Kapaula, Hanawi, and Makapipi streams.) The Commission ordered an annual restoration of water to two streams (Hanawi and Makapipi) totaling 0.66 million gallons per day (mgd) and restoration of water on a seasonal basis totaling 8.6 mgd in the wet season and 0.45 mgd in the dry season in four streams (Waikamoi, West Wailuaiki, East Wailuaiki, and Waiohue). The Commission continued the current flow and diversion levels on the remaining 13 streams.

The seasonal restoration will benefit Hawaii's stream resources, estuarine waters and fish nurseries in the ocean and support agricultural operations.

This new seasonal approach balances the needs of the resources and the demands of offstream users where all interests share the bounty during the wet seasons and share the limits in the dry seasons. (Two streams maintained annual flow restoration because there are downstream water users in one, and in the other an extremely small restoration will greatly benefit the stream biota.)

The Commission's decision also strongly emphasized responsible management of public trust resources. The Commission ordered Maui County to begin construction within three years to fix the extremely leaky Waikamoi Flume to eliminate waste and provide a more reliable water source for Upcountry domestic and agricultural uses. Commissioners stated that Maui County

needs to develop alternative water sources, conservation and reclamation for water supplies. Maui County relies upon stream water for approximately 85 percent of its water needs for the Upcountry system. Due to long-term drought, this is a precarious position for the people of Maui and the County needs to shift the balance of water supply to more reliable sources that do not come at the expense of Hawaii's resources and downstream users of these same waters.

The Commission also ordered HC&S to document and address reservoir system loss of water to reduce waste. In addition, the Commission mandated HC&S to provide annual public reports documenting the actual uses of all east Maui surface waters to maintain accountability and transparency for the public to be assured the water remains in agricultural use. Maui County and HC&S need to make the necessary investments to repair existing infrastructure and to develop responsible and reliable alternative water sources to meet their critical domestic and agricultural water needs.

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