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*For Immediate Release*

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**5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of State Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Day:  
Status of Hawaii's Watershed**

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004 Governor Linda Lingle signed a proclamation declaring this day Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Day in the State of Hawai'i. On the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this proclamation, the Hawai'i Association of Watershed Partnerships (HAWP) is featuring a series of events on various islands during the month of August to invite the public to get involved in protecting their watersheds.

August events will be hosted by the following island Watershed Partnerships (this information can also be found at [www.hawp.org](http://www.hawp.org)):

- On Hawai'i Island, Kohala Watershed Partnership August 15<sup>th</sup> volunteer work day (for information, contact Melora Purell at 808-333-0976 or email [coordinator@kohalawatershed.org](mailto:coordinator@kohalawatershed.org));
- On Maui, Leeward Haleakalā Watershed Restoration Partnership native outplanting and invasive weed control trip August 22<sup>nd</sup> (for information, contact Andrea Buckman at [auwahi@yahoo.com](mailto:auwahi@yahoo.com) or call 808-573-8989);
- On Maui, throughout the month of August, the East Maui Watershed Partnership is hosting art hikes, volunteer days and plein air opportunities for artists interested in participating in Malama Wao Akua 2009, a juried art showcase melding art and conservation of native forests and species open to all ages. To participate, contact Kat Lui at either 808-573-6999 or [pr@eastmauiwatershed.org](mailto:pr@eastmauiwatershed.org);
- On O'ahu, the Ko'olau Mountains Watershed Partnership (KMWP) will be hand-pulling invasive weeds at a post-fire restoration site at Manana on August 6<sup>th</sup>. To participate email [kmwp@hawaii.edu](mailto:kmwp@hawaii.edu);
- On O'ahu, the State Division of Forestry and Wildlife O'ahu branch, a partner in the KMWP, will be planting trees at the old Damon Estate in Moanalua Valley on August 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00-1:00 pm. If interested in joining, please contact Timothy Morrill at either [Timothy.R.Morrill@hawaii.gov](mailto:Timothy.R.Morrill@hawaii.gov) or 808-286-9067.

Individual Watershed Partnerships on each island have made progress against watershed threats. To date these voluntary alliances of public and private landowners have:

- **300,000 acres managed** for feral ungulates and destructive invasive species;
- **Planted 83,000 native and endangered plants** for restoration;
- **Involved 5,500 volunteers** including community members, teachers, and school groups in projects;
- **40 miles of protective forest fence** completed; and
- **\$6.5 million pumped into the state's economy** by supporting local jobs, businesses, and communities.

Future projects to help protect these critical watershed areas include protective fencing and invasives control for 2,000 acres of forested watershed that is the greatest rainfall area on Kaua'i and the source

of five major headwaters (Kaua‘i Watershed Alliance), protective fencing and invasives control for 3,000 acres of native forest in upper Hana watershed that is part of an area in East Maui that produces over 60 billion gallons of water a year (East Maui Watershed Partnership), and the start of a recently awarded \$2.69 million federal stimulus funding grant by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the Kohala Watershed Partnership for habitat restoration to benefit Pelekane Bay.

Hawaii’s forested watersheds are threatened by feral ungulates (hoofed animals such as goats, pigs, cattle, sheep, and deer), invasive weeds such as strawberry guava, *clidemia hirta*, and Australian Tree Fern, forest pests and diseases, and wildfires – all of which can degrade and destroy over 1.2 million acres of critical forested watersheds which provide over 225 billion gallons of water every year statewide to island communities, farmers, and businesses. In addition to water recharge, these forested watersheds also provide erosion control to protect near shore areas for fishing and swimming, mitigate flooding and the effects of climate change, supply culturally important plants for Native Hawaiian practices, provide communities and school children with educational and recreational opportunities, create jobs and support local businesses, house native species found no where else on earth, and protect public health by providing clean air and water. A University of Hawai‘i study estimated the Ko‘olau Mountains on O‘ahu alone provide up to \$14 billion of such benefits.

#### **About the Hawai‘i Association of Watershed Partnerships**

Established in 2003, the Hawai‘i Association of Watershed Partnerships (HAWP) includes nine Watershed Partnerships (WPs) on six islands (Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Moloka‘i, Lāna‘i, Maui, Hawai‘i). WPs are alliances of 60 public and private landowners and other partners working collaboratively to protect over 1.2 million acres of forested watersheds statewide by removing threats such as feral ungulates (hoofed animals such as cattle, pigs, goat, sheep, and deer) and invasive species through protective forest fencing, invasives control, native plant restoration, and outreach and education. HAWP was created to address statewide issues that affect all of the WPs. Its mission is to increase the effective management and protection of mauka watershed areas by raising the capacity of WPs, facilitating sharing of watershed management expertise, building public support for protecting watershed values, and developing sustainable funding sources. To learn more, visit: [www.hawp.org](http://www.hawp.org)

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