



KOHALA WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

Protecting and sustaining the forest, the water and the people of Kohala.

For Immediate Release

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Pelekane Bay Watershed Restoration Project Fact Sheet

Project background

The Kohala Watershed Partnership received \$2.69 million in federal funds through a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) coastal restoration grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The funds will be used to improve the condition of the watershed and to restore the coral reef habitat of Pelekane Bay by reducing land-based sediment inputs into the nearshore environment. The elders of Kawaihae tell stories of the bay when it was traditionally a sheltered place for young fish to grow and mature, but this function has been increasingly degraded as the estuary fills with sediments.

This project to reduce the amount of soil that is being dumped into the bay every time there is a storm has long been envisioned by folks at the Mauna Kea Soil and Water Conservation District. By rehabilitating the mauka watershed through erosion control and planting native vegetation, the amount of soil being carried into the bay will be reduced. Natural recovery is expected, and coral recruitment will be possible.

Project goals

- Restoration of 400 acres of native vegetation along 6 miles of stream corridors;
- Restoration of 100 critically-eroding sites (13 acres of erosion control fabric and grass plantings, 1,450 acres of watershed impacted) with at least 50 sediment check dams protecting four miles downstream of check dams;
- Installation of 100,000 native plants; and
- Construction of 20 miles of goat-proof fencing to create 11,750 acres free of feral goats.

Location

Pelekane Bay is adjacent to Kawaihae Harbor on the leeward coast of Kohala Mountain. The Pu'ukohola National Historical Park overlooks the bay, and the popular Spencer's Beach Park is to the south.

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The designated watershed area includes pastures, stream corridors, and remnant native dry forest owned by Queen Emma Land Company (6,600 acres) and State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (390 acres), all leased to Parker Ranch. These landowners and the lessee are founding partners in the Kohala Watershed Partnership, and have been working together on watershed management projects on Kohala Mountain for many years.

Timing

Work will begin in August 2009, and will be completed by December 2010.

Employment

The project provides economic assistance to the local community through the creation of jobs, including the employment and training of 15 new personnel. Project personnel were hired as field crew, field technicians, and an outreach assistant. All will gain skills in conservation work that can be applied to future restoration projects.

The Kohala Watershed Partnership

The Kohala Watershed Partnership (KWP) is a voluntary coalition of private landowners and State land managers who joined together in 2003 to work across property boundaries to manage the forested watershed of Kohala Mountain and protect it from threats. Invasive alien plants, feral animals, and fire are the greatest threats to the watershed.

Landowners include Parker Ranch, Ponoholo Ranch, Queen Emma Land Co., Kohala Preserve Conservation Trust, Hawai'i State Dept. of Land and Natural Resources, Hawai'i State Dept. of Hawaiian Home Lands, Laupahoehoe Nui LLC, Kahua Ranch and Kamehemeha Schools. Associate partners include The Nature Conservancy and the Hawai'i County Dept. of Water Supply. The KWP works in partnership with The Kohala Center, a Hawai'i Island-based nonprofit dedicated to environmental research and education that support a sustainable future for our island and the world.

For more information

To learn more about the project and KWP, visit hawp.org/kohala.asp or contact Melora Purell, coordinator, at 333-0976, by e-mail at coordinator@kohalawatershed.org. For more information about NOAA Recovery Act projects, see <http://www.noaa.gov/recovery/>.