

The New Silent Invasion Media Campaign

CGAPS 2004 Media Plan Update: January, 2004

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Plants and animals are being moved around the world at unprecedented levels through the movement of vessels and goods. While some of these species will turn out to be benign in their new locations, others will be harmful invasive pests. Invasive pests are defined as plants and animals brought by humans or through human activity, “whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health,” (President Clinton Exec. Order 13112).

In the early 1990s two reports chronicled major problems with our invasive species protection measures and recommended actions necessary for addressing these shortfalls (TNCH & NRDC 1992; OTA 1994). Both reports indicated that Hawaii had the worst invasive pest problem in the nation, and that things would only get worse unless we addressed key issues including inadequate rules and laws, conflicting agency mandates, ill-defined jurisdictions, a lack of planning and cooperation to address new pests, and a ***tremendous lack of public awareness about the problem and solutions.***

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) was formed in 1995 in an effort to address these roadblocks to better protection. Since then, members of agencies and organizations involved in invasive species issues have participated in quarterly meetings in an effort to change policy, improve communications and collaborations, and to work on public awareness. The major successes of CGAPS have been the passing of new legislation, addressing communication, jurisdictional and planning issues, and the creation of Invasive Species Committees on each island to act as rapid response teams to newly arrived invasive pests. However, one of the most important accomplishments of CGAPS was the Silent Invasion media campaign in 1997, which included television commercials, print ads and dramatic pamphlets about invasive species. The campaign ran for close to a year, but since then media efforts (other than press releases) have all but stopped due to a lack of funding and dedicated staff to coordinate a fresh campaign. The CGAPS public information officer position was created in the fall of 2002 to coordinate a new statewide awareness campaign, the subject of this update.

The new Silent Invasion television and print media campaign will be coordinated by the CGAPS public information officer, Christy Martin, with guidance from the CGAPS steering committee, consisting of Chair Carol Russell, USDA-APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine; Deputy Chair Alenka Remec, The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii; Chair Emeritus Earl Campbell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Lyle Wong, Hawaii Department of Agriculture; Lloyd Loope, U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division; Lu Eldredge, Bishop Museum; Michael Buck, DLNR-Division of Forestry and Wildlife; and Teya Penniman, Maui Invasive Species Committee.

Other consultants on this project are media specialists, some of which have already been involved in this planning process. Guidance or in-kind services will continue to be sought from this group, comprised of media professionals at HDOA, DLNR, HDOH, The Nature Conservancy, KITV, Ward Research, Ostrander Chu, Star Tech, PMP Publishing and Malama Hawaii. Additionally, the Landscape Industry Council of Hawaii will continue to be consulted.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW/HISTORY

Invasive pests continue to arrive through legal and illegal means, intentionally imported or unintentionally brought in as hitchhikers in cargo, personal effects and mail parcels (TNCH 1996, CGAPS 1997). CGAPS identified two major pathways that invasive pests are entering the state, first via cargo and personal effects, and second via the landscape and nursery industry. CGAPS also acknowledges that there is a great need for the public's assistance in reporting pests statewide. A media campaign has been designed to address these needs using television and print media to relay three specific messages to the public.

The need for public outreach was proven during focus groups conducted by Ward Research on behalf of CGAPS in late October 2003. The study revealed that many people are unaware of the threats posed by invasive species, and that people do not see a connection between major invasive pests and the potential or actual impact on themselves. A common theme in answers by focus group participants was that if it is not in the news (print and television), it is not a problem. People were also unaware of the ways that pests are introduced via horticulture trade, and through the movement of pests in air cargo. Finally, none of the participants were able to state what they could do to reduce the chances of pests entering the state and becoming established, beyond volunteering their time in weed-pulling projects. The final summary of the focus group work will be distributed when it is available. However, there is a clear need for public outreach on invasive species issues.

As of November 2003, the campaign budget is approximately \$205,760, of which \$145,870 has been secured (see budget page 6). A proposal sent to the Hawaii Tourism Authority for \$56,500 was initially denied, although CGAPS was invited to (and did) submit a revised proposal in December 2003. Additional funds are being sought from the H DLNR-Kaulunani Urban Forestry Program, for \$7,439.

Changes in the budget reflect additional funding received from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If total funding is received, we will be able to purchase additional television time. With a total of \$80K, we would be able to buy a schedule of 16 weeks, over the course of approximately 8 months.

This current push to re-initiate the Silent Invasion campaign makes good use of past efforts and progress. In addition, it targets the two major pathways by which pests are introduced and enables rapid response to new invasive pests. A successful campaign will educate the public about how many pests arrive in Hawaii and how people can help protect Hawaii just by changing a few behaviors.

Description of Project

Message #1: Don't Pack a Pest

Pests arrive via airlines, ships, freight forwarders, and postal service, a large number of which are unintentional introductions of insects, animals and plant diseases and seeds. Items such as uninspected produce, soil, or other high-risk commodities are brought in mainly by residents (business imports or personal) and military personnel, not by tourists (HDOA 2000). Therefore, we need to reach a broad audience of residents with the concept of "Don't Pack a Pest," to alert them of the pathways, the need to declare items that may carry pests, and the need to keep their shipped items clean.

Message #2: Don't Plant a Pest

A second major problem is the purposeful introduction of new invasive plants into the state and the availability of invasive plants in the horticultural trade. Of the plants that pose the greatest threat to native ecosystems, 91% were intentionally introduced as ornamentals, for crops or for forestry, while 9% were accidental introductions (Smith 1985). As mentioned previously, there are problems with the laws dealing with the import and sale of invasive plants, and they are not easily changed, although the responsible agencies are working together to correct these gaps.

One way we can immediately address this issue is to raise public awareness that they play a role in this process, as landscapers, nurseries and garden shops stock what the public asks for. We want to educate people to ask for non-invasive plants with the campaign, "Don't Plant a Pest." People will be able to identify non-invasive plants in garden shops and nurseries by looking for signs or stickers that indicate a plant is safe for the environment. This portion of this campaign revolves around a highly effective new tool called the Weed Risk Assessment system (WRA) that identifies potentially invasive plants before they are planted. Nursery plants are currently being evaluated using the WRA, which employs a series of questions modified from the highly successful New Zealand and Australian systems, which gives a plant a score based on biological and environmental information. This score is a predictor of whether or not a plant might become invasive in Hawaii. Plants that pass the WRA will be marked with a sticker stating that it is safe for the environment. Funding for stickers and signs for the Don't Plant a Pest campaign have been requested from the DLNR-Kaulunani Urban Forestry Program, and additional funding has been received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Message #3: Report a Pest

A third problem that hampers efforts to protect Hawaii is that we are not utilizing the public as our eyes and ears in reporting known and unknown animal and plant pests. It has been documented that 94% of people would call "authorities" if they saw a snake (TNC 1997), but it has also been seen that people do not know who to call, what the number is, or that they need to call immediately. One recent example of this fact occurred where a snake was seen at close proximity, yet the homeowners waited two weeks to call authorities. They then called one agency and were referred to another. After several more days, a team responded, though the snake was never recovered. Additionally, people are not in the habit of reporting unknown animals or plants, as was the case with coqui frogs statewide. People thought it was a new bird calling at night, but many did not think or know to call the pest hotline on Oahu or their local HDOA or DOFAW branches.

All of these issues need to be resolved to enable rapid response to pest sightings. HDOA has a pest hotline number and will use an updated phone tree for agencies and the Invasive Species Committees on each island to conduct rapid response. Catching pests early is the second most effective and economical way of dealing with invasive pests (after prevention), and the only way we can monitor the entire state for new invasive pests is to use the public. Funding has been requested from the Hawaii Tourism Authority Natural Resources Program to enable us to film this message and advertise the pest hotline number. A major portion of the HTA grant request would also fund the placement of the PSAs on television.

Work Plan

The initial phase of this campaign has been to write proposals for funding this project. The amount needed to implement the media campaign, including pre- and post-campaign surveys, and for television and print media is \$205,758.31, of which \$145,868 has been secured from federal, state and private sources and through in-kind services. The CGAPS PIO will continue to look for additional funds to implement this project if funding is not awarded from Hawaii Tourism Authority and DLNR-Kaulunani Urban Forestry program.

Ward Research has been working with CGAPS to track the green industry's and general public's awareness and attitudes towards invasive species and to test messages to be used in the awareness campaign. First, a questionnaire was developed and used at the annual state agricultural conference, held in October 2003. This questionnaire was designed to determine needs for additional outreach to the industries primarily responsible for importing, growing, planting and selling plants. Second, a qualitative survey using three focus groups was conducted in late October 2003, to look at the general awareness and attitudes of people towards invasive species and the draft media campaign messages. The cost for the focus group work is estimated at \$10,000, which will be paid for by a grant from the Hawaii Community Foundation, with the cost of producing the industry questionnaire done pro bono by Ward Research.

Third, a pre-campaign survey will be conducted as close to the airing of the PSAs as possible (estimated at February 2004) to get a baseline measurement of awareness. The media campaign will be followed by a post-campaign survey to measure change in awareness. The pre- and post-survey cost is estimated at \$5,000 each, and both will be done via omnibus survey. The costs of these surveys will be paid for by a grant secured from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and from pass-through money from the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Once the survey results are completed, specific wording will be developed for each of the messages. The storyboards for the PSAs will require a significant amount of collaboration with media specialists in order to relay messages in the most engaging way. The CGAPS PIO will work with the steering committee and media professionals from the agencies and organizations listed previously to design the PSAs. Wording will also be determined for posters and stickers for nurseries and garden shops. Bids for designing and producing the posters and stickers were collected, and once wording is determined, mock-ups of the final products will be solicited from the chosen vendor. Distribution of the posters and stickers is targeted for late February.

Both KITV-4 and KGMB-9 appear to offer the best show schedules combined with high confidence ratings. Pending funding, the filming schedule for the PSAs is targeted for two days in February, to begin airing in March 2004.

A final aspect of this campaign involves the development, printing and distribution of full-color Pest Alerts for plant species that are predicted to be invasive in Hawaii through the WRA, and that appear to be popular new ornamentals. There are several plants that fit this description, yet they are making their way into the landscape and nursery trade. Inquiries reveal that HDOA does not have a budget for producing pest alerts, and will not produce an alert unless it has already been legally listed as a State Noxious Weed, an extremely long and cumbersome legal process. Three pest alerts will be produced each year, and will be distributed as an insert into the Hawaii Landscape Industry Council newsletter, which is direct mailed to approximately 4000 industry personnel statewide. The pest alert design, printing and distribution costs will be paid

for by a grant from the DLNR-Kaulunani Urban Forestry Program (pending), and in-kind services from The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii.

PROJECT BUDGET

EXPENSES	Requested Funds BUDGETED	Secured Funds BUDGETED	TOTAL BUDGETED
Media Surveys			
Pre- & post-campaign surveys	0	10,000	10,000
Landscape & nursery survey	0	Pro bono	0
Focus group surveys	0	10,000	10,000
Television Media			
Public service announcements (3)	5,000	10,000	15,000
Television time (60k will buy 12 weeks time, shown over 6 mo. period)	45,000	33,331	80,000* (60K minimum, 100K max)
Print Media			
Design time for print media	0	(3,245 pro bono)	0
Don't plant a pest stickers (50,000)	2,250	0	2,250
Don't plant a pest posters (1000)	920	0	920
Distribution of stickers and posters	0	775	775
Pest Alerts (4,000 pcs, 3x year)	2,900	0	2,900
Distribution of pest alerts to industry	1,375	225	1,600
Operating Costs			
Mileage	0	500	500
General office supplies	0	800	800
Video/multimedia supplies	0	400	400
Staff			
1 FTE salary, benefits CGAPS PIO	0	56,942	56,942
<i>subtotal</i>	57,445	122,973	182,087
Grant Administration (13% UH)	7,467.85	15,986.49	23,671.31
TOTAL EXPENSES	64,912.85	138,959.49	205,758.31
Income			
HTA Natural Resources Program (request pending)	56,500		56,500
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service		37,500	37,500
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service grant		58,638	58,638
DLNR pass through & supplemental		35,000	35,000
Hawaii Community Foundation		15,000	15,000
DLNR-Kaulunani Urban Forestry grant request (request pending)	7,439		7,439
TOTAL INCOME	63,939	145,868	209,807*

*any additional funding received will be used to supplement television time or print media.