



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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DLNR ISSUES REMINDER ABOUT STREAM DIVERSION ACTIVITIES

HONOLULU -- The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Commission on Water Resource Management (Commission) this summer has received reports of streams drying up, and unpermitted diversions from streams on Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, and the Big Island.

These situations may be due, at least in part, to the low rainfall conditions experienced statewide this year.

In general, most of Hawai‘i’s streams are supplied directly from rainfall. With rainfall this year about half of normal, stream flows have been reduced accordingly.

“With a few exceptions, rainfall totals on all islands in the state have been well below normal since the beginning of 2007 (based on year-to-date rainfall from January through July 2007),” said Ken Kawahara, Water Commission deputy director.

“Water is a precious resource, not only for consumptive uses, but to preserve the life of our native aquatic wildlife such as the ‘o‘opu, and ‘opae. Especially during this period of drought conditions we strongly encourage water conservation. Water is a public trust resource and all residents, businesses, private and public agencies must do their part by not wasting water and being conscious of how much water they are using,” Kawahara said.

The Commission is also reminding the public that any stream channel alteration or any new, or expanded diversion of water from a stream, requires the proper permits from the Commission.

The State Water Code, Chapter 174C, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, authorizes the Commission to require permits for stream alterations and diversions to provide for and protect fishery, wildlife, recreational, aesthetic, scenic, and other beneficial instream uses.

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The permit process also protects existing users where there are competing interests.

The Commission is also authorized to fine any person who violates any provision of the State Water Code up to \$5,000 for each violation. For a continuing offense, each day during which the offense is committed can be considered a separate violation.

In addition, permits or other conditions may be required or imposed by other county, state, or federal agencies.

Anyone with a question regarding stream channel alterations or stream diversions, should contact the Water Commission's stream protection and management branch at 587-0234, or call toll free from the neighbor islands as follows:

- from Kauai - 274-3141 ext 70234;
- from Maui - 984-2400 ext 70234;
- from Hawaii - 974-4000 ext 70234; and
- from Molokai & Lanai - 1-800-468-4644 ext 70234.

For residential water saving tips visit the website WaterUseItWisely.com.

For further information about water resource management and stream diversion, go to Commission's web site at: www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/cwrn

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For more information news media may contact:

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Phone: (808) 587-0320

Sidebar: Drought's impact on island rainfall totals so far this year (January 1 through July 31)

Kauai:

less than 60% of normal amounts at 8 out of 17 rainfall stations
less than 50% of normal amounts at 2 out of 17 rainfall stations

Oahu:

less than 60% of normal amounts at 28 out of 45 rainfall stations
less than 50% of normal amounts at 20 out of 45 rainfall stations

Molokai/Lanai:

less than 60% of normal amounts at 6 out of 7 rainfall stations
less than 50% of normal amounts at 6 out of 7 rainfall stations

State Water Commission notes decrease in stream flow volumes, complaints about water diversions

Maui:

less than 60% of normal amounts at 14 out of 17 rainfall stations

less than 50% of normal amounts at 9 out of 17 rainfall stations

Hawaii:

less than 60% of normal amounts at 17 out of 28 stations

less than 50% of normal amounts at 10 out of 28 stations

Only one station reporting had 100% or more of the normally expected rainfall this year.

(Source: National Weather Service Honolulu Forecast Office Website,
http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/data_tbl_07.html)