



# Media Release

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Public Affairs Office  
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*“Malama na Koa”*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ARMY OBSERVES NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

**KAHANAHAIKI, Hawaii**—Volunteers and Army staff will roll up their sleeves, September 27, as they join the nation in honoring National Public Lands Day.

Oahu Army Natural Resources staff and community volunteers will remove invasive weeds from a large section of Kahanahaiki Ridge, dividing the Kahanahaiki and Makua valleys. The goal is to reintroduce palapalai ferns, which were once native in large numbers to the area.

Besides playing a vital role in Hawaii’s ecosystem, the palapalai fern has historical and cultural significance. Known to grow 4-5 feet tall, the fern was used by ancient Hawaiians to decorate altars to the hula goddess, Laka, and is still used in making lei today.

During the hike to and from the restoration site, OANRP staff will share natural and cultural insights about the area, highlighting the endangered plants and animals found in this mesic forest.

“Kahanahaiki contains one of the last remnants of native mesic forest on Oahu, which is one of the most imperiled forest community types in the Hawaiian Islands,” said Kimberly Welch, OANRP outreach specialist.

“This is in large part due to deforestation, degradation from introduced wild pigs and goats, and the spread of invasive weed species,” Welch added. “The work our volunteers will be doing on National Public Lands Day is a great step toward preserving our environment.”

According to the National Environmental Education Foundation, National Public Lands Day is “the nation’s largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance American public lands.”

Last year, 110,000 volunteers nationwide built trails and bridges, planted trees and plants, and removed trash and invasive plants.

Volunteers interested in participating in the Kahanahaiki work day should contact Kimberly Welch or Candace Russo at 808-656-7641 or email [kimberly.welch2@us.army.mil](mailto:kimberly.welch2@us.army.mil) or [candace.r.russo@us.army.mil](mailto:candace.r.russo@us.army.mil). Space for this event is limited.

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**MEDIA NOTE:** Media interested in attending the event should contact Loran Doane, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, Public Affairs, at 808-656-3157, or email [loran.doane@us.army.mil](mailto:loran.doane@us.army.mil).