



Media Release

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Oahu Army Natural Resources wins top Army award

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii—Spirit, hard work and scaling mountains paid off as U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii’s Natural Resources Team garnered one of the Army’s most prestigious awards, Friday.

The Army publicly announced USAG-HI as the winner of the Secretary of the Army’s 2011 “Natural Resources Conservation Team Award” for the accomplishments of its Oahu Natural Resources Program/Team, or NRT, in a release on Army.mil.

This award is part of the annual Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards Program which recognizes and rewards excellence for the development, management and transferability of environmental programs that increase environmental quality, enhance the mission and help make the Army sustainable.

“Recognition by the Secretary of the Army as having one of the finest natural resource programs in the Army is a public testament to the commitment, professionalism and dedication of the Natural Resource staff of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii. Their work allows the Army to continue to train here and prepare for any contingency our nation requires of its Soldiers,” said Col. Douglas Mulbury, commander, USAG-HI.

“This program, over many years, has not only stabilized threatened and endangered species here on Oahu, but it serves as the model across the Army and federal government on how to collaborate with state, federal and private organizations to manage fragile populations,” Mulbury added.

The Oahu NRT is responsible for balancing the military mission with managing more than 60 federally listed species on more than 50,000 acres of land, with an annual budget of approximately \$6 million. The team supports six Army training ranges on Oahu through strict management of natural resources, enabling approximately 20,000 service members from the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, National Guard and Reserves, as well as local law enforcement, to successfully conduct missions critical to training.

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AWARD 2-2-2

Fifty-one native plants, seven kahuli tree snails, the Oahu elepaio bird, the Hawaiian hoary bat, two picture wing flies, and one damselfly keep the Oahu NRT's tight-knit staff on the go, perfecting management techniques as needed, in order to ensure the survival of these unique Oahu species. What began as a small staff of four in 1995 has now grown to more than 50 personnel, comprised of support staff, a fence crew, three resource management crews, and a nursery/seedbank management crew. Ninety percent of the staff is in the field daily, working with rare species in remote areas of the island across the Waianae and Koolau mountain ranges.

Major 2010 and 2011 team accomplishments include the collection of 5,800 endangered plants for genetic storage, the outplanting and reintroduction of 8,500 endangered plants to their native habitat, and the fencing of more than 1,200 acres of endangered species habitat, to stop the destruction of wild goats and pigs.

"This award is a testament to the top notch effort and professionalism of the members of this team," said Michelle Mansker, NRT chief, Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works. "It is their collective effort that makes this team the best in the Army."

"I couldn't agree more," added Kapua Kawelo, who has been a federal biologist with the team since its inception. "We've come so far in conserving natural resources here on Oahu, and the great strides we have made are largely due to our staff's combined knowledge and skills for resource management, along with their shared passion for protecting Hawaii's endangered species."

As a winner of this Secretary of the Army environmental award, the Oahu NRT will go on to represent the Army and compete in the Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards competition this spring, which recognizes individuals, teams and installations for their outstanding achievements to conserve and sustain the natural and cultural resources entrusted to the Department of Defense.

Visit <http://www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/sustainability> to view photos, videos and learn more about Army natural resource efforts in Hawaii.

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MEDIA NOTE: *Army Natural Resources staff can be made available for interviews; field escort opportunities are also available. For more information, please contact U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs at (808) 656-3160/3154 or cells 542-9489/226-2706.*

AWARD 3-3-3



1. Photo1.OANRPAward.Dan Foreman.jpg

Dan Foreman, natural resource management specialist with the Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, monitors the health of an endangered akoko plant, in a remote native forest of the Waianae Mountains. The OANRP staff regularly measures plants' growth, health and reproductive status to gauge the success of plants that they re-introduce in the wild.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii



2. Photo2.OANRPAward.Greenhouse.jpg

Kim Welch, (red shirt) environmental outreach specialist, Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, leads volunteers on a tour of the upper elevation rare plant nursery in the Waianae Mountains. The OANRP staff processes and cares for seeds collected from endangered plants in the wild, at the greenhouse. Some of the plants and seeds are stored, while others are planted back into the forest, helping boost populations of Oahu's endangered plants.

Photograph courtesy of Roy Kikuta

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AWARD 4-4-4



3. Photo3.OANRPAward.LouluPalms.jpg

Staff with the Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, plants an endangered Loulu palm back into the wild, along the Ohikilolo Ridge, south rim of Makua Valley. For years, the Loulu population dwindled, as rats devoured its fruit and goats ate the seedlings. By the mid 1990s only 74 mature Loulu palms remained in the world, hanging on to the cliffs of Makua. The OANRP successfully fenced goats out of Makua Valley in 2004 and now provide intensified rat control, to protect this rare population of palms. Today there is a carpet of Loulu seedlings along the south rim of Makua, and more than 1,000 palms are thriving.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii



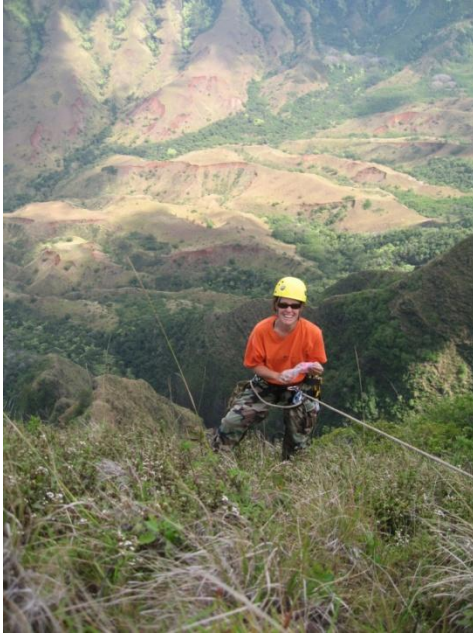
4. Photo4.OANRPAward.Seed Collection

Lauren Weisenberger, propagule management specialist, Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, places a mesh bag over the mature fruit of the endangered akoko plant in the Waianae Mountain Range. The mature fruit capsules of the akoko, are known to split open explosively when they dry, flinging the seeds for a short distance. Bagging the fruit helps in collecting these precious seeds. To ensure the survival of the akoko and more than 50 other endangered plant species, the OANRP staff, collects and stores seeds in special climate-controlled incubators, to serve as a genetic safety net for these Hawaiian treasures.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii

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AWARD 5-5-5



5. Photo5.OANRPAward.Plant Monitoring

Kapua Kawelo, Federal biologist, Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, rappels down Ohikilolo Ridge, at the south rim of Makua Valley, to monitor the health of the endangered cliff-dwelling plants of Makua. When plants produce fruit, staff collects seeds to either be stored for safe keeping or propagated in the rare-plant nursery, destined to one day be returned to the wild.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii