



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

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For Release: March 20, 2009  
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PIEA-09-05  
RO-09-29

## U.S. Army Garrison Hawai‘i Receives National Conservation Award

Rowan Gould, Acting Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has named U.S. Army Garrison-Hawai‘i, Schofield Barracks as the recipient of the 2008 Military Conservation Partner Award. This marks the second time in the award’s short five-year history that military installations in Hawai‘i have won. U.S. Army Garrison-Pōhakuloa won in 2006.

“The Service appreciates the cooperative work of the staff at Schofield Barracks, including maintaining active partnerships with the Service, other federal and state agencies, private organizations, landowners and the University of Hawai‘i,” said Gould. “Through this active participation with partners, Schofield Barracks staff has developed creative tools that benefit threatened and endangered species, the military, and the state of Hawai‘i as they tackle tough issues to protect unique ecosystems for future generations.”

The award, presented March 19, at the 74<sup>th</sup> North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Arlington, Virginia, was created by the Service to recognize military installations that have made significant natural resource conservation achievements through cooperative work with the Service, state, local and other organizations. Such achievements may include the conservation, protection and restoration of important habitat for migratory, endangered, native and game species on military lands.

“This is a great honor and a great tribute to the many, many employees at the Garrison who work extremely hard and are very passionate about preserving and protecting our natural resources,” said Col. Matthew Margotta, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii commander. “An award of this significance doesn’t happen because of the efforts of a few; it takes buy in, dedication and—most importantly—action, from a variety of different sources.”

U.S. Army Garrison Hawai‘i, Schofield Barracks has a 53-person natural resources staff that contributes to the conservation of 73 federally listed species (one bird, nine tree snails, and 63 plants) on seven Army installations throughout the island of O‘ahu.

These dedicated professionals face many difficult challenges often in remote and geographically extreme sites. Many of these sites are only accessible by helicopter and require staff to rappel down steep cliffs and traverse rough terrain to accomplish their conservation goals.

The list of accomplishments by the natural resources staff includes:

- Implementing extensive fencing, weed control, wildland fire suppression, plant propagation, out-planting, and genetic storage programs to ensure the protection of endangered species and critical habitat areas inside and adjacent to installation boundaries.

- Maintaining three greenhouses and funding private contract facilities that utilize pioneering techniques for endangered plant propagation.
- Conducting a program that has successfully out-planted 21 listed plant species. These species account for approximately 23 percent of the total number of individuals occurring in the wild. The Army also maintains a genetic storage program to safeguard against losses at unmanaged sites and unanticipated disturbances in managed areas. Due to these efforts, two endangered plant species, *Cyanea superba* and *Phyllostegia kaalaensis* - extirpated as a result of damage from rats, grazing and competition from weeds - were recently reintroduced to the wild.
- Improving the status of several species such as *Pritchardia kaalae*, an endangered Hawaiian palm tree. Seed predation and browsing of seedlings by rats and goats significantly reduced the reproductive success of this historically widespread species. In 1999, only one germinating fruit, and no seedlings, were found at the Makua Military Reservation. Due to animal damage and rat control measures, over 600 *Pritchardia* seedlings were found at Makua in 2007.
- Providing funds to interagency partners, university researchers and graduate students to participate in ongoing implementation team meetings facilitating communication regarding habitat and species management between knowledgeable parties and agencies.
- Funding biological surveys that have uncovered previously unknown listed plant and animal locations, and rediscovered an endangered tree snail, *Achatinella bulimoides*, which for the past 20 years was thought to be extinct.
- Educating the public by coordinating monthly presentations to schools and community groups and weekly volunteer service projects in the field for high school and college classes, clubs, scouts and the general public.
- Funding summer internships for local youth interested in pursuing careers in natural resource management.
- Contributing to interagency fencing and animal removal efforts and responding with skilled fire staff and fire suppression aircraft when wildland fire threatens natural areas in the Waianae Mountains of O‘ahu to minimize native forest loss.

The Army partners with many different entities including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife, the University of Hawai‘i, O‘ahu Fire Council, watershed partnerships, Lyon Arboretum, private landowners, and The Nature Conservancy to conserve endangered species on O‘ahu.

For more than 40 years, since the passing of the Sikes Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has worked in cooperation with the military to conserve fish and wildlife resources found on the 30 million acres of land owned and managed by the Department of Defense. These lands are valuable to maintaining survival and diversity for many important species.

In recent years, natural resource management on installations has attained a greater significance with the Department of Defense, Congress, and the public, leading to the creation of integrated natural resource management plans (INRMPs) under the Sikes Act. In response, many military installations have accomplished exceptional conservation work using partnerships with agencies, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

**Note to Editors:** Images are available by calling Ken Foote at 808 792-9535