



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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NOAA Celebrates Earth Day at Recovery Act Reef Restoration Project in Hawaii

NOAA joined The Nature Conservancy and community organization Mālama Maunalua in Maunalua Bay today to celebrate Earth Day at an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project to remove invasive algae from more than 22 acres of coral reefs. The project is employing area residents to design, manage and implement the effort.

"Around the country and here in Hawaii, the Recovery Act is helping stimulate local economies with blue and green jobs," said Andrew Winer, director of NOAA external affairs. "Restoring coral reefs is also a long-term investment in the health of the ecosystem, which bolsters the economy with healthier commercial and recreational fisheries and tourism."

The manual removal of invasive algae in nearshore waters will stimulate new coral growth and increase opportunities for native seagrass to re-establish and expand in the area. NOAA provided \$3.4 million in Recovery Act funding to The Nature Conservancy for this project.

"This bay's coral has been smothered by sediment and invasive algae," said Suzanne Case, The Nature Conservancy's executive director in Hawaii. "Today, thanks to Recovery Act funding, we're working with a broad base of community members and other organizations to clean up the coral reef flats, giving important native species a chance to return. This project puts people to work and will help energize the 60,000-member community to address other threats to the bay."

Through the Recovery Act, NOAA was provided \$167 million for marine and coastal habitat restoration. The Maunalua Bay Reef Restoration project is one of 50 habitat restoration projects selected by NOAA for this funding.

More than 30 projects have broken ground, with the rest preparing to start throughout the next year and a half. The 50 projects are supporting thousands of short-term and long-term jobs. They support the equivalent of more than 250 full-time jobs as of the latest report and are expected to support the equivalent of an additional 1,000 full-time jobs before they are completed.

When all the planned projects are complete, 8,900 acres of habitat will be restored, and fish will gain access to 700 stream miles that had been blocked by obsolete and unsafe dams. The projects also will remove more than 850 metric tons of abandoned fishing gear and other marine trash, rebuild oyster and other shellfish habitat, and reduce threats to 11,750 acres of coral reefs.

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On the Web:

NOAA Recovery Act: <http://www.noaa.gov/recovery>

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