



National Park of American Samoa News Release

For Immediate Release
Mike Reynolds, Superintendent
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National Park Promotes Climate Change Research and Awareness

In conjunction with the Governor's mission and the Department of Commerce Climate Change Summit, the National Park of American Samoa continues to promote climate change research and community awareness. The national park has one of the best natural laboratories in the world for climate change research and is already taking actions to prevent the possible affects of climate change on the territory.

Corals in Ofu lagoon are specially adapted to survive brief hot water events that would normally lead to coral bleaching. The average summer temperature of lagoon waters is 29° C (84.2° F), but can rise above the 32° C (89.6° F) bleaching level for several hours during low tides. Despite these conditions, bleaching usually affects less than 1% of the coral in the lagoon. During the past 20 years, other territorial reefs have suffered periodic coral bleaching events.

Recently the national park renovated its ranger station and small laboratory to support research on Ofu. The University of Hawaii, Stanford University, and Dominican University of California have conducted ground-breaking research on Ofu's corals unique adaptations to hot water events.

At the local level, it makes sense that a healthy rainforest will be able to confront climate change impacts better than a rainforest being over-run by non-native invasive species. Invasive species are bad because they out-compete the native rainforest trees and reduce forest biodiversity.

For the past ten years, the national park has worked towards eliminating rapidly spreading invasive species and restoring disturbed areas by re-planting native tree species. Efforts to eliminate the invasive tamaligi tree from the park have been successful and other invasive species are also being removed. Ten acres of disturbed and damaged forestlands along the Mt. Alava trail have been restored by planting over 1,000 native trees.

The national park also reminds locals and visitors that they can take actions everyday to help make our climate cleaner and be a part of the solution. Simple changes like replacing lightbulbs with compact fluorescents, turning your A/C temperature up, turning off and unplugging appliances not in use, covering pots while cooking, only washing full loads and line-drying laundry, reducing and reusing bags and other materials, walking, carpooling, taking the bus and making trips more efficient, and spreading the word to your friends and family to do what they can to stop climate change and be a part of the solution.

The National Park of American Samoa was established in 1988 to preserve the coral reefs, tropical forest and archeological and cultural resources of American Samoa, to maintain the habitat of fruit bats, and to provide educational opportunities for visitors and residents. National Park lands and waters are leased from villages and the American Samoa Government through a long term agreement with the National Park Service.

For more information about visiting the National Park of American Samoa, call 633-7082, email NPSA_Info@nps.gov or visit its website – www.nps.gov/npsa.

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