



HAWAI'I CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

A Partnership Dedicated to Environmental Stewardship, Community Engagement and Conservation Capacity

ALLIANCE PARTNERS

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center for Conservation Research & Training

Hawai'i Department of Land & Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Wildlife

Hawai'i Department of Land & Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources

Hawai'i Department of Agriculture

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Department of Defense Army Garrison Hawai'i Natural Resources Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station

U.S. Geological Survey - Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge Complex

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Ecological Services

The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i

National Tropical Botanical Garden

Kamehameha Schools

National Park Service

Bishop Museum

Office of Hawaiian Affairs

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service - Pacific Southwest Region

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF STATE OF HAWAI'I WATERSHED INITIATIVE

The Hawai'i Conservation Alliance (HCA) is a cooperative collaboration of conservation leaders representing 19 state and federal agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations. HCA's mission is to provide unified leadership and advocacy on conservation issues critical to Hawai'i. Collectively, we are responsible for managing the biodiversity of Hawai'i's lands and waters with over 1,600 square miles of land and 140,000 square miles of marine area designated for biodiversity protection. HCA strives to manage these resources in a manner that integrates Native Hawaiian approaches and knowledge systems with conventional conservation efforts to care for Hawai'i's 'āina and people.

The HCA strongly supports the watershed restoration proposal entitled "The Rain Follows the Forest" put forth by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). This timely proposal will advance broad goals of community sustainability, ecosystem integrity, and biodiversity conservation by: 1) controlling key threats to priority watersheds, including invasive plant and animal species, fire, and plant diseases; 2) restoring the integrity and water retention capacity of these watersheds through protection and replanting of native species; and 3) educating Hawai'i's public as to the value of ecologically intact watersheds. By providing effective forest management, this initiative will help to replenish streams and aquifers diminished by decades of ecological neglect.

The HCA further supports the DLNR watershed proposal because it is congruent with the broader goals and management efforts of the HCA. These include:

- 1) Reversing ecosystem degradation;
- 2) Enhancing ecosystem functioning and resulting goods and services;
- 3) Preservation of native ecosystems;
- 4) Increasing the diversity of native species;
- 5) Maintaining native biodiversity for future generations; and
- 6) Ensuring a sustainable management of Hawai'i's natural resources for island communities.

The HCA, therefore, stands ready to support and contribute to Hawai'i's watershed restoration efforts through:

- 1) Collaboration at various levels;
- 2) Management of adjacent land parcels by members such as Kamehameha Schools, National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, among others;
- 3) Enhancing biosecurity efforts to prevent emergence of new threats; and
- 4) Facilitation of funding opportunities through programs with agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and U.S. Forest Service, among others.
- 5) Increasing community, cultural and technical capacity to state efforts in support of sustainable land to sea watershed management.

In summary, "The Rain Follows the Forest" plan ensures the irreplaceable natural environment and its life giving benefits are maintained by and across generations. The HCA commends the DLNR for putting forward this important proposal.