



University of Hawai'i at Hilo

640N. A'hoku Place, Room 203, Hilo Hawai'i 96720

Telephone (808) 933-0734 Fax (808) 933-3208

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Mailing Address: 200 W. Kawili Street, Hilo Hawai'i 96720

Stephanie Nagata  
Director  
Office of Mauna Kea Management  
808-933-0734  
[omkm@hawaii.edu](mailto:omkm@hawaii.edu)

## **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS PLANT SILVERSWORD ON MAUNA KEA OFFICE OF MAUNA KEA MANAGEMENT CONTINUES TO MALAMA MAUNA KEA**

**Hilo, Hawaii**—The Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM) the primary agency responsible for the University of Hawai'i management areas on Mauna Kea, continued its efforts to malama Mauna Kea as volunteers helped pull invasive weeds and planted a hundred Mauna Kea silversword this past weekend.

Organized by OMKM Natural Resources Program Manager Fritz Klasner, this ongoing effort is focused on restoring native habitat surrounding the Onizuka Center for International Astronomy Visitor Information Station on Mauna Kea at the 9,500 foot elevation.

“Planting silversword keiki will help ensure the species existence on Mauna Kea for future generations. This was made possible by a record number of volunteers on Mauna Kea today helping us to take care of the mountain,” said OMKM Natural Resources Program Manager Fritz Klasner. “We started these invasive weed pull events at the 9,500 foot elevation last year and we’ve since logged over 1,500 volunteer hours. This past Saturday was our first replanting of native habitat.”

The State of Hawaii, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) made the seedlings available to plant, provided planting instructions, and obtained needed permits. The plantings are in the Division's silversword enclosure near the Visitor Information Station. The Mauna Kea silversword is a member of the silversword alliance, a group of endemic Hawaiian plants that scientists believe all evolved from a single plant species which originated in North America several million years ago.

Mauna Kea silversword grown naturally in the wild can live for over fifty years. The nearly 100 silversword planted today were grown in a DOFAW nursery. Once they establish a firm root system, which should take about a year, each plant is expected to live on Mauna Kea anywhere from thirty to fifty years.

More than thirty-five community volunteers participated in the planting including students, businesses and several families. Volunteers began the day preparing planting locations, pulled invasive fireweed in the Silversword Enclosure, and then planting each silversword with a bit of love.

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### **The Office of Mauna Kea Management**

The Office of Mauna Kea Management is charged with day-to-day management of Mauna Kea Science Reserve as prescribed in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve Master Plan by the University of Hawaii Board of Regents in June 2000 marked a critical milestone in the management of Mauna Kea.

Meetings and public hearings spanning a period of nearly two years went into the formulation of the Master Plan, which established management guidelines for the next 20 years. The process reflected the community's deeply rooted concerns over the use of Mauna Kea, including respect for Hawaiian cultural beliefs, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, recreational use of the mountain, and astronomy research.

The Master Plan places the focus of responsibility with the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UHH). The UH-Hilo Chancellor established the Office of Mauna Kea Management and Mauna Kea Management Board in the fall of 2000. The Mauna Kea Management Board in turn formed Kahu Ku Mauna, a council comprised of Hawaiian cultural resource persons to serve as advisors.

The mission of the Office of Mauna Kea Management is to achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Mauna Kea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.