



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)

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Office of Mauna Kea Management Takes Action Preparing Invasive Species Management Plan for Mauna Kea**

**Hilo, Hawaii—** The 2009 Mauna Kea Comprehensive Management Plan and policy documents such as the State of Hawaii's 2011 "The Rain Follows the Forest" plan emphasize the importance and value of invasive species control.

The Office of Mauna Kea Management, in collaboration with the Big Island Invasive Species Committee and Hawaii Ant Lab, is drafting an Invasive Species Management Plan which addresses the core principles of invasive species response including prevention, early detection, rapid response, control of established species, monitoring, and outreach and education. One of the key concepts in this effort is a pathways analysis, evaluating risks associated with invasive species and the range of pathways a non-native species may use to find their way on to Mauna Kea.

"OMKM understands and is committed to maintaining the special symbiotic relationship of flora and fauna within the Science Reserve area on Mauna Kea," said OMKM Director Stephanie Nagata. "We must address the threat invasive species pose for this area. This management plan puts us on the right path to do so."

Several examples of OMKM's ongoing invasive species response efforts include:

- Preventative inspections and cleaning protocols, developed in collaboration with Haleakala National Park staff.
- Community-based invasive weed pulls at Hale Pohaku and along the Mauna Kea Summit Access Road corridor.
- Continuous monitoring for non-native arthropods at facilities.
- Collaboration with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture on honeybee colony health.

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While planning efforts are, at least initially, more of an office-based effort; a wide variety of research, control, and prevention activities are also ongoing. Highlights from recent months include:

In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, OMKM is monitoring for honeybees and varroa mites. While honeybees are surprisingly common, the good news is the varroa mite is not common. Through this collaboration OMKM hopes to learn more about how to minimize the spread of varroa mites.

OMKM, along with Big Island Invasive Species Committee has been testing and comparing various inspection and cleaning procedures for permitted uses on Mauna Kea. These tests help improve existing procedures and have proven helpful in collaborations with similar sites such as Haleakala National Park.

In 2012, OMKM started community-based invasive weed pulls. Organized by OMKM Natural Resources Program Manager Fritz Klasner, these successful invasive weed eradications have logged nearly 1,500 volunteer hours and more than 800 bags of weeds have been taken off the mountain. With the success of the community-based invasive weed pulls, OMKM recently celebrated its first replanting of native habitat when volunteers planted more than 100 silversword keiki. 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.

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#### **About 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 Hawai'i 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 Master Plan 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.

It 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 the Board of Regents established the 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.

*Note to editors: If you are interested in high-res images to accompany this media release or for additional assistance including subject interviews, contact Laura Aquino at 808-326-7820 or via email at [laura@current-events.com](mailto:laura@current-events.com)*