



PRESS RELEASE

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Funds Received for Invasive Species Awareness Campaign

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) has received several grants to conduct the *Silent Invasion* media campaign, with messages that will raise awareness about invasive species and what people can do to protect Hawaii from invasive pests.

Funds received include close to \$80,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, \$35,000 from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, and an additional \$40,000 from the Department of the Interior will aid in outreach primarily about brown tree snakes. A \$50,000 grant from the Hawaii Tourism Authority-Natural Resources Program will allow these messages to be placed on the major local networks. The messages included in the campaign are:

1. “Protect Hawaii—Don’t Plant a Pest.”

Close to 40% of the invasive plants that are threatening Hawaii’s forests and natural areas were brought to the State and planted purposefully in yards and gardens as ornamentals. Nurseries and garden shops unwittingly sell invasive ornamental plants, and people assume that the plants they buy are safe for the environment. Therefore, the message to the general public is that they can help protect Hawaii by asking for non-invasive plants, and that their choices at their nursery or garden shop can make a difference in forests and natural areas.

2. “Protect Hawaii—Don’t Pack a Pest.”

This message will inform people that they could unknowingly carry unwanted pests into the state hidden in fruits, plants or even soil from overseas. People can help protect Hawaii by declaring all items listed on the agriculture forms so that they can be inspected for unwanted pests.

3. “Protect Hawaii—Report a Pest.”

Public awareness studies indicate that the majority of people do not know whom to call when they see a snake or other invasive pest. Additionally, the current State Pest Hotline number

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is not easy to remember, and calls originating outside of Oahu are not toll-free for the caller. This message will ask people to watch for invasive pests and to promptly report them to a new, toll-free Pest Hotline number, which will be assigned shortly.

“In reviewing this proposal with the members of our Natural Resources Advisory Group, it became clear that the campaign offered a way to leverage HTA's available funds with many other partners to impact all of Hawaii's natural resources,” said Rex Johnson, President and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. “While it may not seem so important, the truth is that these alien species are oftentimes very destructive to our native plants and animals. As is often the case, it costs much more to clean it up after than to prevent it from happening in the first place. We are pleased to be able to be a part of this effort to educate both our residents and visitors.”

The campaign will be launched in the spring of 2005 and will feature televised public service announcements and printed information about invasive species and how people can help to protect Hawaii.

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