



News Release

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Contact: Cindy Knapman
Phone # (808) 956-7410

Getting There From Here *Coastal access information now available in five states*

Across the country, fishermen, ocean recreational users, land-use managers, and waterfront property owners face conflicts over access to beaches and shorelines. In Hawai'i, the ongoing loss of beaches and public access statewide has intensified public controversy, so in response the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (UH Sea Grant) created an online resource to serve as a repository of information on the issue.

The website, <http://seagrantsoest.hawaii.edu/coastal-access-hawaii>, was developed by UH Sea Grant to serve as a community education and outreach effort for improving access to information and laws related to public shoreline access. "A common complaint we have heard is a lack of clear information on public access and enforcement responsibilities across the state, which has led to confusion and conflict in some communities over maintaining public access to and along the shoreline," said UH Sea Grant's Dolan Eversole, who formerly served as a coastal management technical advisor to the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). He noted "the website acknowledges Hawai'i's unique distinction between access *to* the beach which is regulated by counties, and access *along* the shore which is regulated by the state."

The site was developed with funding from the National Sea Grant Law Center. In addition to UH Sea Grant, the Sea Grant programs in Alabama, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia were also provided funding to adapt a comprehensive website previously developed by Maine Sea Grant. "One of the main objectives of the Law Center's grant competition is to build capacity of individual Sea Grant programs to conduct outreach on legal issues in their states," said Law Center director Stephanie Showalter. "It is therefore essential that the tools developed are shared throughout the network. I'm glad the Law Center could facilitate the replication of the Maine website, and I hope other Sea Grant programs will consider adopting and building on this model in their states."

Government interest in public beach access has recently been confirmed when, on June 2, 2010, Governor Lingle signed into law HB 1808 (Act 160 (10)) which calls for the DLNR to enforce newly defined beach transit corridors. Act 160 intends to specifically address the issue of beach vegetation that restricts public access along the shoreline. Similar efforts to address shoreline vegetation that restricts public beach access are ongoing at the City and County of Honolulu City Council as they consider a sister ordinance for vegetation along the shoreline.

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The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program is part of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's prestigious School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. It supports an innovative program of research, education and extension services directed to the improved understanding and stewardship of coastal and marine resources of the state, region and nation. Science serving Hawai'i and the Pacific for over 40 years.