



# News Release

For Immediate Release  
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## New community partnership on Hawai‘i Island aims to improve water quality

*UH Sea Grant awarded federal and state funding to reduce stormwater runoff, pollution, and erosion*

A clean stream through Waimea and less pollution entering the ocean are the goals of the Wai 2 Kai Project.

Sierra Tobiason, [University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program](#) (UH Sea Grant) extension agent and [South Kohala Coastal Partnership](#) coordinator, is leading an effort to help improve water quality at five specific sites which were identified as hotspots of pollution, erosion, and stormwater runoff.

The two year Wai 2 Kai project will take place at five sites along the Waikoloa stream and within the Wai‘ula‘ula Watershed. At these sites volunteers will be recruited to install and maintain raingardens, participate in stream and beach clean-ups, remove invasive plant species, and help the project reach its goal of planting 20,000 native plants.

These native plant restoration and Wai 2 Kai volunteer activities were designed to not only restore and improve water quality, but to encourage long lasting stewardship and understanding of the importance of healthy watersheds.

Sierra Tobiason noted “The organizations, agencies, and community groups of the South Kohala Coastal Partnership have been instrumental in helping to develop collaborative stewardship opportunities to improve the water quality from wai to kai - the stream to the ocean. It is very exciting to have so much community involvement and partnership support in this project as we work together to improve water quality and reduce impacts to coral reef ecosystems.”

Community work days will be held on the fourth Saturday of each month from 9:00 am – noon, and the location of the work days will rotate between the five sites. On June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Waimea Nature Park the public is invited to help spread mulch, remove invasive plants, and plant native shrubs and ground cover. To volunteer please email [Wai2KaiCoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:Wai2KaiCoordinator@gmail.com) by June 25, 2015.

For additional information on the project, or to volunteer for any of the upcoming community work days, contact Sierra Tobiason at [tobiason@hawaii.edu](mailto:tobiason@hawaii.edu), Maria Derval “Didi” Diaz-Lyke at [mddiaz@hawaii.edu](mailto:mddiaz@hawaii.edu), or log on to [www.Wai2Kai.com](http://www.Wai2Kai.com).

The project was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act, and the Hawai‘i State Department of Health, Clean Water Branch. Support for the first volunteer work day was provided by PATH (People Advocacy for Trails Hawai‘i), and was organized in partnership with the Mauna Kea Soil and Water Conservation District.

The South Kohala Coastal Partnership is helping to implement this project. Other partners include: Natural Resources Conservation Services; Mauna Kea Soil and Water Conservation District; Parker School; PATDI Inc.; Waimea Center; Waimea Preservation Association; Waimea Outdoor Circle; Waimea Trails and Greenways; County of Hawai'i; Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources; Kohala Watershed Partnership; Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization; Division of Forestry and Wildlife; Sustainable Resources Group Int'l Inc.; and Queen Emma Land Company.

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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 45 years.*