

# Hawai'i Invasive Species Council

## Mission

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) was established for the special purpose of providing policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives for the control and eradication of invasive species throughout the State of Hawai'i and for preventing the introduction of new invasive species.

The HISC was established in 2003 by Chapter 194, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, which determines its composition and responsibilities, and gives its member agencies special abilities to enter property to control invasive species. Co-chaired by the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, the HISC also includes voting members from the University of Hawai'i and the Departments of Health, Transportation, and Business, Economic Development and Tourism. HISC is supported by a portion of the Conveyance Tax, which is administered through the Natural Area Reserve Fund and the DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

## Programs and Scope

The HISC approves an annual budget that is recommended by HISC working groups to support efforts in the areas of Prevention, Response and Control of Established Pests, Public Outreach, and Research and Technology. The tasks, goals, objectives, and measures of effectiveness for the Council and each working group are described in the 2008-2013 HISC Strategic Plan. The Resources Working Group facilitates the budget-setting process and presents a proposed balanced budget to the Council for a final decision.

FY	Funds
2008	\$4,000,000
2009	\$4,000,000
2010	\$2,000,000
2011	\$1,800,000

For FY11, the HISC received \$1.4M in Conveyance Tax funding. This amount was supplemented by an additional \$400,000 from the Legacy Land Conservation Commission provided via amendments to Act 209, Section 3, Section 173A-5.



*Mr. Earl Sanders, head greens keeper at Hualalai Resort, inspecting rover ant nests with Dr. Arnold Hara. Rover ants sometimes drive golfers from the course, who demand a refund of their greens fees.*

## Current Program Focus and Initiatives

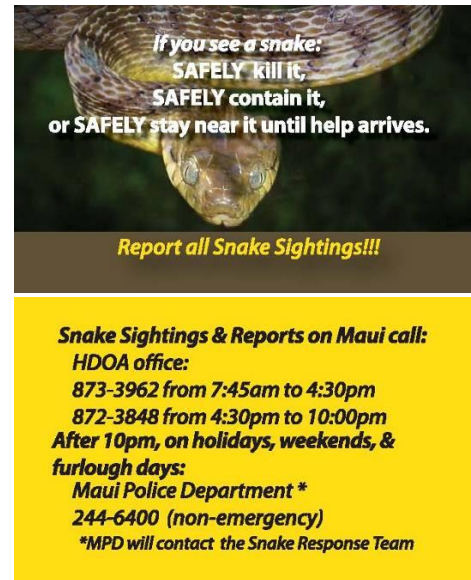
- **PREVENTION WORKING GROUP**
  - Prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species by supporting a ballast water and hull fouling program
  - Prevent the spread of invasive ants and the introduction of species not-yet-known to Hawai'i by supporting a statewide invasive ant program
  - Prevent the introduction of invasive plants through the horticultural trade by supporting Weed Risk Assessment Specialists
- **RESPONSE AND CONTROL OF ESTABLISHED PESTS WORKING GROUP**
  - Manage established pests, such as miconia and coqui frog, on a statewide level by providing core support to the county-based Invasive Species Committees (ISCs) to conduct early detection, rapid response, management, and eradication programs for island-specific priorities
  - Manage widespread pests, such as fireweed and fountain grass, by supporting the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's biocontrol program
  - Manage invasive pests in marine and fresh water systems by supporting an Aquatic Invasive Species Team to control species like invasive algae



*Pampas grass removal in East Maui Watershed*

- **PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKING GROUP**

- Support county-based outreach efforts by providing core funding for ISC Outreach Specialists
- Provide statewide coordination of the HISC’s priority public outreach initiatives and partnership communications by supporting a Communications Coordinator
- Increase public education about aquatic invasive species issues by supporting the outreach efforts of the Division of Aquatic Resources, Aquatic Invasive Species Program
- Provide educational resources to the public via a website, [www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org](http://www.hawaiiinvasivespecies.org), managed by the HISC-supported, Hawai’i Ecosystems at Risk Technical Assistant
- Support new educational projects that target audiences identified in the Strategic Plan and incorporate priority messages, such as the Public Service Announcements to encourage the public to “Buy Local” as a way to lower the risk of introducing invasive species through imports



Wallet-sized snake response card

- **RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP**

- The Research and Technology Grants Program was not continued in FY10 and FY11 due to limited funds. Past projects include: “Ecological, Hydrological, and Economic Impacts of Miconia in Hawai’i” and “Green and Healthy Hawai’i: Identifying and Introducing Alternative Ornamental Landscape Plants in Response to Invasive Species Issues.”

## Most Pressing Needs

- Identify and develop **sustainable funding** for invasive species prevention and management
- Hire a full-time Grants Manager dedicated to grant management and funding acquisition
- Coordinate and promote the state’s position on federal issues, such as international trade agreements, quarantine preemption, and first class mail inspection
- Address inter-island transport of invasive species
- Implement the capacity to conduct snake interdiction and rapid response to all snake sightings
- Review and update the injurious wildlife and noxious weed lists
- Review and revise regulations governing the introduction of biocontrol agents
- Restore the Research and Technology Grants Program
- Conduct a public awareness survey to measure effectiveness of HISC-supported outreach

---

*The silent invasion of Hawai’i by insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests is the single greatest threat to Hawai’i’s economy and natural environment and to the health and lifestyle of Hawai’i’s people. Invasive species already cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native forests, and the spread of disease. Every day the media reports another serious case of an invasive species attacking Hawai’i, whether it is the coqui frog, Salvinia molesta, Miconia calvescens, or dengue fever.*

*Yet there are many more harmful species that threaten to invade Hawai’i and wreak further damage. Even one new pest, such as the brown tree snake or the red imported fire ant, could forever change the character of the islands. Stopping the influx of new invasive species and containing their spread is essential to Hawai’i’s future well-being. Unwanted invasive species are entering Hawai’i at an alarming rate--about two million times more rapidly than the natural rate. In 1993, the federal Office of Technology Assessment declared Hawai’i’s alien pest species problem as the worst in the nation. Hawai’i’s isolation from the continents and its modern role as the commercial hub of the Pacific make these islands particularly vulnerable to destruction by invasive species. Gaps in invasive species prevention systems and a lack of public awareness further add to this serious problem.*