

Title: Outreach Program

Organization: O'ahu Invasive Species Committee

Award(s): \$30,000

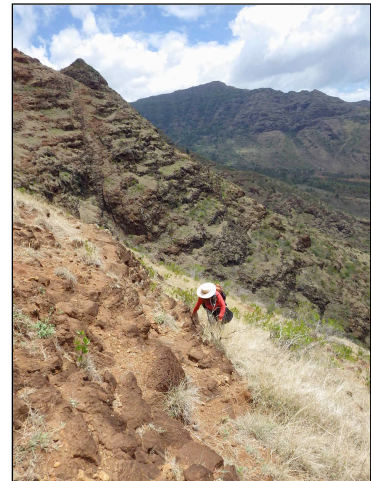


Introduction: The O'ahu Invasive Species Committee was founded by a group of volunteers concerned about the spread of miconia and fountain grass on O'ahu. These pests had already wreaked havoc on the ecosystems of other islands, but were only just beginning to do damage on O'ahu. OISC realized early on that outreach is essential to all field operations. Since OISC's mission depends on getting voluntary permission from private property owners for OISC field crews to survey their lands, outreach is key. Also, the public can report OISC target species and assist OISC's mission by making responsible choices when choosing plants for their home landscaping. HISC funds supported 3.65% of OISC's overall budget and 54% of the budget for the outreach program.

Achievements in FY13

Built support for invasive species work in the communities where OISC field crews operate through work with landowners and community groups:

Working with landowners is a continuing outreach activity that involves securing permission for field crews to access, survey for and remove miconia or other target invasive species from a private property or area, requiring one-on-one communication with landowners and community groups. In FY 2013, the outreach specialist engaged 56 landowners in invasive species control that involved 209 contacts with these landowners by phone, email and/or letter. Ninety-eight percent of all landowners contacted agreed to allow access to their property for invasive species control. One landowner refused to allow an early detection target species, *Pennisetum villosum*, an invasive grass, to be removed from her garden plot, but she did agree to remove the flowering heads to curb seed production and the spread of the plant. A follow up survey in early 2013 found that the plant was no longer in the garden plot and had been removed. The site will be monitored by the OISC field crew for potential re-growth of the *P. villosum* plant.



After the outreach specialist secured permission from the landowners, the OISC field crew searched the cliffs of a private property in Wai'anae to locate and remove an incipient population of invasive fountain grass

The Mānoa Neighborhood Board regularly invites OISC to present information about invasive species at their monthly meetings, providing an opportunity for OISC to speak about OISC's activities as well as new initiatives by HISC and other partner programs. In FY 2013, presentations were given on how to make responsible planting choices using the Hawai'i Pacific Weed Risk Assessment, how to detect and report coqui frogs on O'ahu (co-presented with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture), how to participate in the statewide Hawai'i Bioblitz event to learn about native, non-native and invasive species in their area, and OISC's 2012 accomplishments for miconia control work in Mānoa Valley. OISC also presented at Wai'anae Neighborhood Board meetings regarding a joint helicopter spray operation between OISC and the O'ahu Army Natural Resources Program to control an incipient population of invasive fountain grass in Wai'anae. The board continues to support these operations and understands that fountain grass is a high priority species to control because infestations can cause more frequent and destructive brush fires. OISC communicated with the Board to inform them of scheduled spray operations and presented at two neighborhood board meetings to provide updates on the operations as well as to answer

questions from the community.

Operated the OISC volunteer program in partnership with Lyon Arboretum:

OISC's volunteer program is a partnership with Lyon Arboretum that leads volunteers to remove three harmful invasive plant species from Lyon's plant collections, (*Ardisia virens*, *Ardisia sieboldii* and *Stromanthe tonckat*). The volunteer program raises awareness about and garners support for invasive species issues by involving the public in hands-on efforts to remove incipient invasive species and gives them an opportunity to experience the success of their work as plant numbers decline over time. In FY 2013, OISC's volunteer program engaged 58 volunteers who contributed 340 volunteer hours to remove 7,001 individual plants of the three targeted invasive plant species. Efforts will continue until these species can be declared eradicated.



*OISC volunteers found and removed this *Ardisia virens* plant, an invasive species found only at Lyon Arboretum that could damage O'ahu's watershed forests*

Assisted with the development and implementation of a statewide public outreach event for National Invasive Species Awareness Week in 2013:

OISC's outreach specialist collaborated with other members of the HISC Public Outreach Working Group to develop, market and implement a week-long, state-wide event coinciding with the inaugural Hawai'i Invasive Species Awareness Week. The focus of the event was a "Hawai'i Bioblitz" that invited residents of all ages to discover, photo-document and post on the Project Noah website the plants and animals they encounter in their everyday lives. The event also offered the opportunity for the public to interact with local plant and animal experts to learn about which species in Hawai'i are native and non-native, and which non-native species are harmful as invasive. 158 people took part in the event posting 340 photos of plants and animals for identification by the 30 local experts who signed on to participate.

A "Go Out and Listen Night" event was developed, marketed and implemented to promote the use of a new coqui frog reporting program on O'ahu, the Honolulu 311 mobile app:

OISC partnered with the City and County of Honolulu Department of Information Technology to add the reporting of coqui frog to the City and County's "Honolulu 311" mobile application to test using this technology for reporting by the public. OISC's outreach specialist developed and marketed a "Go Out and Listen Night" event that involved members of the public going outside, listening for the sound of the invasive coqui frog, and reporting if they did or did not hear the frog. Marketing included an informational website, press releases and media interviews. The event engaged the participation of 133 residents from across O'ahu reporting to OISC through email, phone or the mobile app, with the majority (69%) reporting using the mobile app. Twelve reports of coqui frogs were investigated by the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee in cooperation with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and were identified as greenhouse frogs, another introduced invasive frog that, unlike coqui frog, is already established and widespread on O'ahu. OISC's outreach specialist was interviewed by two television news and one radio reporter, and the event was featured in 14 newspaper and television stories. The event website received approximately 4,300 visits, indicating the message about how to identify and report coqui frogs on O'ahu reached beyond those that participated the event that night.

Presented information about invasive species to public and private organizations and at community and public events:

OISC delivered a total of 34 presentations and event participations that reached approximately 5,600 people from a wide variety of audiences across O'ahu. Audiences included members of the general public, legislators, landscape and agriculture industry professionals, teachers and students (elementary to college level), neighborhood board and community members, geographical information services (GIS) user groups, map librarians, and heavy machinery operators working on the Honolulu rail project. Events included the Hawai'i Youth Conservation Corps Environmental Fair, the UH CTAHR O'ahu Agriculture and Environmental Awareness Day, Agriculture Awareness Day at the State Capitol, the Science Alive event at Bishop Museum, and career days at various schools in Wai'anae.



Parents and children play an interactive game about invasive species at the OISC outreach booth

Conducted outreach through traditional and social media:

The OISC outreach specialist wrote two articles that were published in traditional print: "Big, bad weeds" featured in GREEN magazine in July 2013 reaching 25,000 readers and "Beware the call of the coqui" featured in the Sierra Club's Malama i ka Honua Newsletter in April 2013 reaching 4,000 readers. The outreach specialist participated in one radio and 5 television interviews related to the "Go out and Listen Night" event and other invasive species topics reaching an audience of 679,000 residents. OISC maintains a Facebook page to use social media to educate members of the public about OISC's activities and invasive species issues. In FY 2013, OISC's outreach specialist made 329 posts on OISC's Facebook page, the number of "likes" on the page increased by 184 to reach 474, and the page had an average weekly reach of 628 people (an increase from year 2012's average weekly reach of 477 people).

For more information, please contact:

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