



6 February 2003

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Kawainui Marsh Restoration, Oahu, Hawaii

1. Purpose: To provide information on the subject project.
2. Points of Major Interest and Facts:

a. The Kawainui Marsh Restoration project is an ecosystem restoration project being developed under Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. Kawainui Marsh is adjacent to and affected by the Kawainui Flood Control Project, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorized and constructed facility. The project is currently in the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase. The plans and specifications are scheduled to be completed by January 2004, and construction award by December 2004.

b. Kawainui Marsh is the largest remaining wetland in Hawaii and was identified in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *Hawaiian Waterbirds Recovery Plan* as primary habitat for the endemic and endangered Hawaiian stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*); Hawaiian moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus sandvicensis*); koloa maoli or Hawaiian duck (*Anas wyvilliana*); and Hawaiian coot (*Fulica alai*). The Kawainui Marsh Restoration project focuses on habitat restoration primarily for the Hawaiian stilt and the Hawaiian moorhen and includes creating more than 60 acres of mudflats and shallow ponds, restoring 2,800 lineal feet of riparian habitat along Kahanaiki and Maunawili Streams, installing predator exclusion fencing, implementing a predator trapping program, and purchase of a flail mower to control vegetation on 17 acres. The local sponsor is the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife. The current cost estimate for improvements is \$5,000,000. The local sponsor will cost share 25 percent of the total project cost.

c. Prior to the construction of the Kawainui Flood Control Project in 1966, there were two outlets to Kawainui Marsh, at Oneawa Channel and at the Kawainui Stream/Hamakua Canal. The flood control levee closed Kawainui Stream's connection to the marsh. With the exception of the 1988 New Year Flood, Kawainui Marsh has adequately performed its role as a flood storage basin for the Kawainui Flood Control Project. However, a thick floating mat of vegetation has been steadily growing and has the effect of retarding flow through the marsh. The overgrowth of vegetation is steadily converting a once thriving traditional Hawaiian fishpond and its associated habitat and natural benefits into an upland ecosystem. Vegetation is compressing open water areas which waterbirds use for habitat. Mudflats are scarce and the only areas that are not overgrown are areas with deep water.

3. Congressional Interest. There is minimal Congressional interest in this project, at this time.