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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Corps of Engineers joined City and County of Honolulu and Community Members to Celebrate Earth Day 2009 Activities at Pacific Regional Visitor Center**

By Joseph Bonfiglio, Honolulu District Public Affairs

**(Honolulu, Hawaii NR 09-09)** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently joined with the City and County of Honolulu and concerned citizens to participate in the City and County of *Honolulu's* Earth Day 2009 *Mauka to Makai* Connection to the *Ala Wai* Cleanup.

Approximately 20 volunteers from the Punahou High School Junior ROTC program, 20 Cub Scouts from Pack 464 in Mililani, many Corps of Engineers employees and family members and numerous community members joined forces to clean up the beach and berm area of the Corps' Pacific Regional Visitor Center (RVC) at Fort DeRussy on April 11. Over 60 volunteers participated.

"I feel good about doing this," said Col. Robert Takao, commander of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps at Punahou High School. "Our program has been doing this for several years now. It's a very worthwhile endeavor. It helps our students understand how fragile our environment is and how important it is for our students to understand their responsibility to protect the environment."

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## **Earth Day 2009 2/2/2**

These sentiments were echoed by Pack 464 Leader Tanya Castro.

“I’m teaching the Cub Scouts that we have to take care of the planet so it can take care of us,” Castro said. “Our motto is to help and serve. I hope that the Cub Scouts can be role models for us so that we can all take care of the *aina*.”

The cleanup was also held in honor of the Earth Month *Mauka to Makai* Connection to the *Ala Wai* efforts to protect the *Ala Wai* Watershed and Oahu’s reefs.

“I was happy to join the Earth Day volunteers. We gathered a significant amount of trash from the beach and berm area at Fort DeRussy,” said Steve Yamamoto, chief of the Civil Works Technical Branch at the Honolulu District.

“Our Park Rangers, Angela Jones and John Mueller did a super job in organizing and coordinating this event.”

In addition, to the Fort DeRussy cleanup, the City and County of *Honolulu*, Department of Environmental Services sponsored other environmental events the same day including an Earth Day *Mauka to Makai* Environmental Expo at the *Waikiki* Aquarium with participants from many organizations interested in keeping Honolulu green and clean.

The expo showcased the efforts of city, state and federal agencies to preserve and protect *Hawai'i's* environment, with an emphasis on the Islands' unique water resources.

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## **Earth Day 2009 3/3/3**

Family-friendly activities included picture-taking with *Apo*ha the 'o'opu, water pollution prevention games, arts and crafts, and storytelling about Hawai'i's environment; [www.waquarium.org](http://www.waquarium.org).

At the ocean, children released dozens of *Moi* into the wild behind the *Waikiki* Aquarium. *Moi* are an important part of the Hawaiian culture, believed to be the prized fish of the *Ali'i*.

Cindy Barger of the Honolulu District attended the expo and told participants about the proposed *Ala Wai* Watershed project in which the Corps is teaming up with the city of *Honolulu* and the state of *Hawaii* to study various solutions for a comprehensive watershed approach to reducing the risk of flooding in *Waikiki* and improving the water quality of the area. Barger manned the Corps' booth at the event to educate the community on issues in the watershed and objectives of the *Ala Wai* Project study.

Partners in the *Ala Wai* watershed project also had booths at the event: the Natural Resources Conservation Service; City and County Department of Environmental Services; Board of Water Supply; Department of Land and Natural Resources, Commission for Water Resource Management and the Department of Health.

All of the events featured family-friendly and hands-on educational displays by city, state and federal agencies and the University of Hawaii. Hundreds of people participated in several events around the city and county including many adopt a stream clean ups in the *Ala Wai* watershed.

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## **Earth Day 2009 4/4/4/**

Earth Day is an annual event in Honolulu and increases awareness and support for ongoing education and efforts to build partnerships and grassroots involvement to keep the *aina* clean year-round.

Earth Day was established March 21, 1970 as an annual event to deepen reverence and care for life on the planet.

For more information about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, log on to the Honolulu District website: <http://www.poh.usace.army.mil>; or call 438-2815 for information about the Pacific Regional Visitor Center.

The Corps' RVC first opened its doors at Battery Randolph in 1983. Its goal is to enhance the public's understanding of the multidimensional role of the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Particular emphasis is on civil works and water resources development that affect the lives of all the residents of Hawaii and the people of the Pacific.

The RVC is located on the second floor of historic Battery Randolph at Fort DeRussy, *Waikiki*. Battery Randolph is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites and is one of 16 coastal fortifications built by the Corps between 1906 and 1917 for the protection of *Honolulu* and Pearl harbors.