



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

**Public Affairs Office
Honolulu District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858-5440**

**Contact: Lacey Justinger
or Joseph Bonfiglio
Telephone: (808) 438-9862**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2010

Corps of Engineers Promotes Community's Understanding of the Ala Wai Watershed

By Lacey Justinger, Honolulu District Public Affairs

(FORT SHAFTER, HI NR 06-10) For the second year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Honolulu District, jointly manned a booth with Ala Wai Watershed Association during the Ala Wai Challenge Jan. 24, to answer questions and distribute information about the Ala Wai Watershed Project, along with representatives from Senator Taniguchi's office, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services, CH2M Hill and Townscape, Inc., Environmental & Community Planning companies.

"Everyone needs to participate if we want to implement changes to make the watershed to be more sustainable; the Corps, the State, the community organizations and the homeowners," said Cindy Barger, a biologist and project manager with the Honolulu District.

The Ala Wai Watershed Project is still in the feasibility phase to address the water resource management. The project explores options to restore ecosystem functions and prevent flooding in the Ala Moana, Makiki, Manoa, McCully-Mo'ili'ili, Palolo, St. Loius-Kapahulu-Diamond Head and Waikiki areas, especially in the case of a 100-year-flood. Additional project objectives include re-establishing the natural stream habitat, addressing contaminants and sediment in the water to improve quality and quantity, reducing secondary impacts on the reef, and identifying projects for funding or improvement.

More than 100 attendees stopped by the booth to gather information and get a better understanding of the existing conditions and what the project was about; like where the Ala Wai watershed is, the goals and objectives of the Ala Wai Watershed Project, where the program funding comes from and how community members can become involved.

-more-

Ala Wai 2-2-2

“We realize the importance of community input in helping us to develop a comprehensive ecosystem restoration solution,” said Debbie Solis, a civil engineer who represented the Corps at the booth. “We learn a lot from listening to the stories from people familiar with the area who stopped by to ask questions and share their observations and memories with us. Their stories help us to look at the work we do from various perspectives and will ultimately help us to develop a better solution.”

The Corps uses the Ala Wai challenge as an opportunity to connect with the Waikiki and Manoa communities and as a forum to share knowledge through the partnerships with the non-federal cost-share sponsors, community groups and corporations like the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency, Hawaii Coral Program, Division of Aquatic Resources, City and County of Honolulu Permitting and Planning and City and County of Honolulu Stream Maintenance.

“The Corps is a piece of the puzzle in an integrated approach to address ecosystem restoration, reduce the risk of flood damage, address the array of problems in the Ala Wai watershed and implement a lot of objectives and goals,” said Barger.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funds 50 percent of the Ala Wai Watershed Project, cost-sharing along with the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources and the City and County of Honolulu Department of Environmental Services.

“We bring a lot of tools to the table because the community has been vocal about how they want to see the watershed and how they want to address the environmental concerns in the Ala Wai,” said Barger. “The community members are really driving the project.”

For additional information about the Ala Wai Watershed Project visit www.alawaiwatershed.com.

-30-

Cutline:

Representatives from the Ala Wai Watershed Association meet with community members to present information and gather perspectives during the Ala Wai Challenge in Waikiki, Jan. 24.

Courtesy Photo by Paul Luersen, CH2M HILL