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## Hawaii shoreline restoration projects getting \$6 million from NOAA

*Advertiser Staff*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will send more than \$6 million in federal stimulus money to support two Hawaii projects dedicated to restoring shorelines.

On Oahu, NOAA announced today that The Nature Conservancy and Malama Maunalua's invasive algae removal project will receive \$3.4 million in federal stimulus money to create 73 new jobs and restore marine habitat in Maunalua Bay.

NOAA said it also will send \$2.69 million in stimulus money to the Kohala Watershed Partnership as a coastal restoration grant to improve conditions at the Pelekane Bay watershed on the Big Island.

NOAA received \$167 million in stimulus funding and today announced the selection of 50 high-priority projects that will support more than 5,000 jobs and help restore American shorelines. The Conservancy's Hawaii chapter and Malama Maunalua, a local grassroots organization, will work with state and federal partners to implement a large-scale invasive alien algae removal program as the necessary first step to restore habitat in the Kuliouou reef flats of Maunalua Bay. More than a dozen jobs will be created to implement the Pelekane Bay Watershed Restoration Project, which aims to restore the coral reef habitat of Pelekane Bay by reducing land-based sediment inputs into the nearshore environment.

Volunteers have been working for three years to pull invasive algae from Maunalua Bay.

NOAA is providing the \$3.4 million for the jobs, equipment, supplies, and scientific studies necessary for the two-year project.

"This support comes at a critical time for both the environment and the economy of Hawaii," Suzanne Case, executive director of the Conservancy's Hawai'i chapter, said in a statement.

"This money will be passed directly to our community, putting people to work to restore a vital marine resource for Hawaii. Our residents need jobs, and our reefs need a break from the alien algae that are smothering them.

"There's no better investment in our state than to improve the health of our near shore ocean, which is a source of food, recreation, and income for many."

Most of the 73 new positions will be full time, including as many as 60 invasive algae removal positions for 14 months, and additional positions for monitoring the impact of the project. The funds also provide support for a portion of time spent by Conservancy and Malama Maunalua staff to help manage the project.

Invasive alien algae have been identified as one of the biggest threats to Hawaii's coral reef ecosystems. Sedimentation from land-based sources helps invasive algae establish on reef flats. Compounding the problem, fishing pressure has dramatically reduced populations of plant-eating species like parrotfishes, surgeonfishes, manini and sea urchins.

Once established, invasive algae drastically alter the seabed by smothering and killing corals and seagrass meadows.

For more information about the Maunalua Bay project and the Conservancy's Hawaii chapter, visit: [www.nature.org/hawaii](http://www.nature.org/hawaii)

For more information about Malama Maunalua, visit: [www.malamamaunalua.org](http://www.malamamaunalua.org)

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