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## Hawai'i Volcanoes NEWS RELEASE

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## **Volunteers Invited to Join Efforts to Oust Fountain Grass**

Volunteers are again invited to join Ocean View Community Association, Hawaiian Ocean View Estates Road Maintenance Corporation, and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park staff to remove fountain grass from roadsides in Ocean View.

A Fountain Grass Service Day is scheduled for Sunday, December 10, 2006 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Participants should meet at 9:00 am at the Ocean View Community Center and bring lunch, water, a hat and sunscreen.

"Volunteers will learn how to identify and successfully remove this perennial bunch grass," said David Benitez, Research Project Specialist at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.



Ocean View residents pull together to eradicate fountain grass

Most plants can be uprooted by hand. For deep-rooted individuals, 10% Roundup can be applied directly on the plant using a hand sprayer bottle. Seed heads are collected in bags and disposed of to prevent the spread of individuals into new areas.

"Volunteers will also hear why the State of Hawai`i's Department of Agriculture declared fountain grass a noxious weed," added Benitez.

Native to Northern Africa, fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is a highly aggressive, fire-promoting species. It accumulates large volumes of dead biomass and burns rapidly with high intensity. It is one of the few invasive species that can colonize young lava flows. As a result, wildfires spread unchecked into surrounding subdivisions, pastures, and forests.

Fountain grass is invading Ka`u subdivisions. Small populations are found throughout Ocean View, Hawaiian Ranchos, and adjacent lava flows. If left unchecked, the grass will continue to spread and result in increased fire hazards.

"Fortunately, in most areas, populations are small and control efforts to remove or contain the spread of the
grass are still possible," said Benitez.
For more information on the Fountain Grass Service Day, contact David Benitez at (808) 985-6085, or by email at david_benitez@contractor.nps.gov