



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

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## Hawai'i Volcanoes NEWS RELEASE

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### Volunteers Needed to Help Eradicate Fountain Grass

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

The outing will take place on Saturday, January 12th 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.



*Fire-promoting fountain grass has invaded lava flows and subdivisions in Ka'u*

"Those who join in will learn about the problems caused by invasive plants and how to identify and safely remove them," said David Benitez, research project specialist at Hawai'i Volcanoes.

Native to Northern Africa, fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is an aggressive, fire-promoting species. It accumulates large amounts of dead biomass and burns rapidly with high intensity, contributing to destructive wildfires such as the 2005 and 2007 Waikoloa Fires.

Fountain grass is one of the few non-native species that colonizes young lava flows. It's invading subdivisions in Ka'u and 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.

"Past outings have been very productive," said Benitez. "So far, we've removed about 9,000 fountain grass plants, but more importantly, we're taking the necessary steps to try to prevent a destructive wildfire in Ocean View."

For more information, contact Benitez at 985-6085 or by email at [david\\_benitez@contractor.nps.gov](mailto:david_benitez@contractor.nps.gov)

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