



Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

November 4, 2009

Volunteers Needed to Help Restore Rare Plants in Park



On Saturday, November 21, 2009 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, park rangers will host one in a series of monthly volunteer service projects at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

"Service projects are a great way to learn about a variety of park programs," Laura Williams, park volunteer coordinator said. "Volunteers are vital to our mission of protecting the park's natural and cultural resources."

The November service project will help stabilize two rare species in the Thurston Special Ecological Area – 'oha kepa'u (*Clermontia hawaiiensis*), pictured left and below, and ha'iwale (*Cyrtandra giffardii*). Both species are unique to Hawai'i and very rare in the park.

Volunteers are needed to help plant 200 of the seedlings in the rain forest near Thurston lava tube, a unit that is fenced to keep out feral pigs. They will also help remove invasive ginger.

In 1986, the unit was selected to be one of the park's first special ecological areas. When pigs and non-native plants were removed, many native plant species made a dramatic recovery. However, some species had become so depleted that they were unable to recover without assistance.

"About 8,500 acres of park rain forest are managed to exclude non-native ungulates and invasive plants providing one of the best opportunities in the state for rare plant recovery," said park botanist Sierra McDaniel. "This service day project is part of a larger program to protect and restore plant diversity and 11 rare rain forest species."

Participants should be able to hike at least one mile over rough uneven terrain. They should wear sturdy shoes, long pants, sunscreen, and a hat and bring lunch, water, and a rain jacket.

The project is limited to 10 people and pre-registration is required. To volunteer, call Laura Williams at 985-6304 and leave a message that includes a contact phone number and the names of each participant. No more than four in a group.

Participants should thoroughly check and clean their vehicles before coming to the park to make sure they're not transporting Coqui frogs and non-native seeds into the park.



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