



MCBH PRESS RELEASE

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MCBH partnering with DLNR and others to support \$8.7 Million REPI Challenge project to target invasive species in waters surrounding the Mokapu Peninsula

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII – As part of the Department of Defense’s (DoD) 2023 Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge, Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH) has partnered with the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and other key partners to support an \$8.7 million project (\$3.4 million in REPI Program funds and \$5.6 million in partner contributions) to manage invasive species and perpetuate the water resources of O‘ahu by protecting and enhancing native ecosystems. Currently, coral reefs located in Kāne‘ohe Bay and Kailua Bay help to protect MCBH from the effects of large surf, strong currents, and storm surges. These coral reefs are being threatened and affected by invasive species. Without healthy, intact reefs surrounding the Mokapu Peninsula, MCBH will not be protected from storms that are growing in intensity from climate change. This project employs the development of eDNA technology for the detection of invasive aquatic species in Hawaiian harbors and the expansion of native urchins to manage widespread invasive algae in Kāne‘ohe Bay.

This innovative project requires close partnership and coordination to achieve the shared benefits of healthy reef conservation, increased climate resilience, and enhanced installation resilience. Through joint efforts with the State of Hawai‘i, this project will strengthen the shores of Hawai‘i and reduce high-impact invasive species in the vicinity of MCBH.

As the Pacific region grows in strategic importance, the REPI Program has continued to increase efforts to preserve and protect cultural, natural, and land resources that benefit Hawaiian residents and the DoD mission. The 2023 REPI Challenge in Hawai‘i has contributed \$10 million in REPI Program funds, to be coupled with \$18.5 million in partner contributions. The 2023 REPI Challenge projects in Hawai‘i will preserve and protect cultural, natural, and land resources on the windward side of Oahu and across the

state near three other Hawai'i-based installations - Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands, Pōhakuloa Training Area, and U.S. Army Garrison - Hawai'i.

"The DoD is committed to good stewardship of the environment and these projects, in partnership with the DLNR, are a demonstration of that commitment," said Marine Corps Major General Mark Hashimoto, Mobilization Assistant to the Commander U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. "The military in Hawai'i will always play a key role in the defense of our nation, the region, and the world, and as we perform this no-fail mission, it is imperative we also protect the land and water for future generations."

Projects within the Indo-Pacific Region will help implement partnership efforts focused on improving coastal and forest resilience, which benefits the long-term sustainability of MCBH, our local communities and other military installations around Hawai'i. To learn more about this year's Hawai'i REPI Challenge funding recipients, visit: www.repi.mil/Buffer-Projects/REPI-Challenge.