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The Department of the Navy and the State of Hawaii Advance Efforts to Ensure Water Safety & Security

11 August 2022

Recent cooperative agreements aim to improve water testing and fund restoration activities to improve water quality and availability.

WASHINGTON - The Department of the Navy (DON) and the State of Hawaii are working together to advance water resilience and water safety at Red Hill, the surrounding region on Oahu, and across the state.

\$14.9 million REPI Challenge Funding to Hawaii

The DON and the State of Hawaii entered into a cooperative agreement for the DON to put \$14.9 million in Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI) Challenge funding towards the Pearl Harbor Aquifer and the surrounding ecosystem. These funds will implement landscape scale watershed protection, restore native forests to replenish the Pearl Harbor Aquifer, and provide long-term protection in the



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“The Navy sees itself as part of the community, and with that role comes a

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Meredith Berger, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment. “Oahu’s water sources provide potable water across the island, and we expect these water quality improvements will benefit every resident of Oahu.”

The focus of this REPI initiative, which kicked off Aug 1, 2022, is to safeguard drinking water supplies at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam (JBPHH) and protect the upland forests as a necessary action toward protection of the aquifer and the replenishment of water to support installation resilience and readiness. The project provides long-term protection of 7,155 acres of forested lands in the watershed directly above JBPHH. These native forests protect the source of drinking water for JBPHH and the surrounding local community, provide a buffer from major storm events that cause erosion and flooding, and subsequently minimize impacts to mission operations.

“Establishing mutually beneficial relationships with our communities ultimately ensures long-term success,” said Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett, commander, Navy Region Hawaii. “This collaborative effort between the Navy and the State of Hawaii to restore the Waiawa Watershed will positively impact the environment and the community for years to come. Securing this grant is the result of years of cooperation by the Navy and the State of Hawaii. This grant advances and supports our commitment to maintain the health of the aquifer and water quality at Pearl Harbor, to protect the community, and ensure mission resilience at this strategic location.”

DON-University of Hawaii Water Resilience Collaboration

In March 2022, the DON and the University of Hawaii (UH) established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on water and energy resilience in the State of Hawaii. The terms of the MOU supports the University of Hawaii in conducting and coordinating independent scientific and engineering research. The Office of Naval Research (ONR) provides funding and Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center (NAVFAC EXWC) provide services.

“UH shares a mutual vision with the Navy for education, practice, and research to promote water resilience and safety, and health and environmental mitigation, as well as climate resilience and coastal adaptation,” said Dr. Vassilis Syrmos, Research and Innovation Director at UH. “UH has assembled a team of hydrologists, engineers, chemists, ecologists, geographers, political scientists, economists, and social scientists. The interdisciplinary team in collaboration with ONR and NAVFAC EXWC spearheads efforts aimed at enhancing water security and resilience in the Pacific region by developing



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planning models and tools that will enable proactive decision-making. The end

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An ONR grant was awarded to UH for science and technology development, including hydrology research in August 2022, and UH efforts are underway to initiate research and support field work. Future efforts will expand on water and energy resilience.

The Department of the Navy is working with the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) as DOH collaborates with the UH Red Hill Task Force on drinking water sampling to ensure water testing is based on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-certified methods.

“We are glad to see academics at UH and the regulators at DOH come together to ensure that the UH screening tool matches up with DOH and EPA approved testing protocols to provide clear, reliable water quality information to the community,” Berger said. “Clear information and safe drinking water are important for everyone.”

For more information on these actions, go to the news section of <http://www.navy.mil/jointbasewater>.

For more information on long-term monitoring of the Navy water system, go to <https://jbphh-safewaters.org>.



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