



# Media Release

---

Public Affairs Office  
U.S. Army Garrison, Hawaii  
(808)656-3160  
*“Malama na Koa”*

Release number: 2013-12-02  
Dec. 10, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Army, state partner to protect Oahu’s watersheds**

**SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii** —The Army and the state came together, here, to transport nearly 200,000 pounds of fencing into the Ko’olau Mountains, as part of an airlift operation to protect Oahu’s watersheds, Dec. 5.

Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade joined resources with the U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii’s natural resources program, known as the Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, and the State of Hawaii’s Department of Land and Natural Resources, Natural Area Reserves staff to accomplish the mission.

The material will be used to build a 12-kilometer fence enclosure to protect 1,000 acres of native forest in the summit areas of the Ko’olau Mountains on State of Hawaii and Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate lands.

The steel fencing was hooked to a Chinook CH-47 helicopter and sling-loaded from Schofield Barracks to staging zones located in a remote area of the Poamoho Section of the Ewa Forest Reserve.

“The Chinook’s capabilities allowed us to haul 17 times more material per trip than the contracted aircraft is able, saving time and money,” said Kapua Kawelo, biologist, USAG-HI OANRP. “As an added bonus, the Soldiers were able to exercise their sling-load skills.”

The fencing project is being led by the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, with support from the Army and other members of the Ko’olau Mountain Watershed Partnership. The majority of the funding for the \$1 million project is provided by DLNR’s “Rain Follows the Forest” initiative, with an additional \$300,000 provided by the Army and \$250,000 from the U.S. Forest Service.

“This is a critical location for watershed recharge to Oahu’s Pearl Harbor aquifer that provides water to Oahu communities. Protecting priority watersheds from damage caused by hoofed animals is the first priority of the ‘Rain Follows the Forest’ program,” said Marigold Zoll, project lead, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, DLNR. “Fencing is the most feasible way to prevent these animals from trampling and devouring vegetation and reducing the spread of non-native invasive species.”

## **2-2-2 ARMY, STATE PARTNER**

The project does not restrict access or recreational opportunities, according to Zoll.

Over the next year, Army staff will construct three kilometers of the total fence, and a state contractor will complete the remaining nine kilometers of the enclosure.

Nine rare plant species and two species of the endangered kähuli tree snail are located within the Army portion of the fence. Once the fence is complete Army natural resources staff will collect seeds from rare plants, re-plant rare and native plants, and monitor and control invasive plants and introduced species that impact the survival of the native forest.

The Army is a member of the Ko'olau and Waianae Mountains Watershed partnerships on Oahu, as well as the Mauna Kea Watershed Alliance on Hawai'i Island. Through these partnerships, the Army joins public and private landowners to protect large areas of forested watersheds that replenish groundwater and are home to numerous native plants and animals.

"It's partnerships like these that really make a difference and enable big projects to move forward," said Zoll, "Every bit counts, and is essential to the success of the project as a whole."

This is the fifth Ko'olau partnership fence on Oahu the Army has supported and is the first fence project under DLNR's "Rain Follows the Forest" program according to Kawelo.

Hawaii-wide the USAG-HI natural resources program manages more than 100 threatened and endangered species in support of Army requirements to enable Soldier training while protecting the local environment.

The Army's natural and cultural resource programs partner with more than 40 local, state and national entities as part of their stewardship efforts.

For more information visit:

- Army Natural Resources Program  
<http://www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/sustainability/NaturalResources.aspx>
- DLNR's Rain Follows the Forest initiative  
<http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/rain/>
- Hawaii Association of Watershed Partnerships  
<http://hawp.org/>

**PHOTOS AND CUTLINES BELOW**

**PHOTO NAME: Soldiers hook slingload to CH47**

**CREDIT: U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii**

Soldiers with the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, secure a 1,000-pound bundle of fencing to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, to airlift the material from Schofield Barracks to the summits of the Ko'olau mountains, Dec. 5. Soldiers, along with staff from the U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii's Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, and the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife, transported more than 20 bundles of material, in a single day, to support a fence building project under the "Rain Follows the Forest" program.

**PHOTO NAME: Chinook with Sling load**

**CREDIT: U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii**

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter heads to the summits of the Ko'olau mountains carrying a 1,000-pound bundle of fencing material, Dec. 5. Soldiers with the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, along with staff from U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii's Oahu Army Natural Resources Program, and the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife airlifted more than 20 bundles of material in a single day from Schofield Barracks to staging zones located in a remote area of the Poamoho Section of the Ewa Forest Reserve. The operation supports a fence building project under the "Rain Follows the Forest" program.