

HFIA Wins 17th Annual *Keep It Hawai'i* Award

The Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA) is pleased to announce the Hawai'i Tourism Authority selected HFIA's *Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest Volunteer and Outreach Program* as a recipient of its 17th Annual *Keep It Hawai'i Recognition Awards*. The *Keep It Hawai'i* awards were presented to individuals, organizations and businesses in recognition of their commitment to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture. HFIA won the *Lehua Maka Noe Award* for Hawai'i Island.

The Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest project is a 70-acre site located in North Kona on Hawai'i Island. The project includes maintaining and perpetuating dryland forest ecosystems and sharing their unique historical, cultural, restoration, and scientific aspects. It increases public awareness of the significance of Hawai'i tropical dryland forests as they pertain to Hawai'i as well as world ecology. Yvonne Yarber-Carter, Education and Outreach Coordinator created and coordinates the outreach program.

Since 1993, HFIA has managed the Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland forest, which has included: providing on-site environmental and cultural education and stewardship; outplanting over 5,000 seedlings; and protecting the site from invasive species, fire, and grazing. More than 1,800 students and community volunteers have contributed over 12,200 hours for planning, outplanting, weed control, monitoring, building interpretive trails, and other activities.

The Program would not be possible without project partners including Kamehameha Schools, PIA-Kona Limited Partnership, Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Hawai'i Forest Institute, Change Happens Foundation, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

A big mahalo and congratulations to the Ka'ūpūlehu Dryland Forest Team: Mike Robinson, HFIA President, Sally Rice, HFIA Director; Yvonne Yarber-Carter, Education and Outreach Coordinator; Wilds Pihanui Brawner, Ka'ūpūlehu Site Manager; Jill Wagner, Biological Services; Keoki Carter, Education and Outreach Volunteer, Midge Casuga, Weed Control; Deborah Griffiths, HFIA Development Coordinator; and Heather Gallo, HFIA Executive Director.