

Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) Fiscal Year Summary Narrative

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

This fiscal year marked 11 years of Hawaii Environmental Restoration’s committed work in the Keau‘ohana Forest Reserve, and with it came the formal transition from calendar year to fiscal year reporting. FY 2024–25 was a steady and meaningful year for HER, demonstrating consistent management, robust community engagement, and continued ecological care.

HER launched its ninth systematic restoration pass in August 2024 and remains on track to complete the full 20-acre Keau‘ohana site within the fiscal cycle. Maintenance efforts emphasized repeat sweeps in the most sensitive zones—especially regions supporting endangered and newly planted native species. Although the anticipated fencing project was again postponed, HER responded with increased crew coordination and more frequent site-wide walkthroughs to protect outplants from pig disturbance.

A total of 855 native seedlings were planted during FY 2024–25—contributing to a long-term vision of returning shaded native forest canopy to degraded areas. Seedling stock was largely provided by the Koa‘e Native Plant Nursery, overseen by Ann Kobsa, and now operated under HER’s nonprofit umbrella. While the prior year saw record-breaking totals, this year’s planting and monitoring efforts maintained strong momentum and ecological diversity.

HER facilitated nine volunteer field days and participated in ten outreach and educational events over the course of the year—bringing the number of special event days to 19. In total, 151 individuals contributed 635 hours of service toward HER environmental and educational efforts. These efforts reflected the contribution of students, residents, visitors, and partner organizations from across the island and beyond.

Outreach highlights included a vibrant return to UH Hilo’s Earth Day event, participation in regional restoration achievements, and partnerships with local schools and cultural festivals. HER also remained a key collaborator in the Lowland Wet Forest Working Group (LWFWG), contributing to forest planning across East Hawai‘i and continuing to strengthen peer-led learning around restoration strategy.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to the Kosasa Foundation, the Atherton Family Foundation, County District 4, and all individual supporters who have nurtured HER’s mission this year. Together we share a commitment to safeguarding the irreplaceable biodiversity and cultural value of Hawai‘i’s native rainforests.

Key Metrics & Achievements

- **Seedlings Planted:** 855 native trees planted in Keau'ohana
 - **Volunteer Engagement:** 151 individuals contributed 635 volunteer hours
 - **Event Participation:** 19 total special event days (9 forest volunteer days, 10 outreach/education events)
 - **Cumulative Totals Since 2014:**
 - 8,432 volunteer hours by 1,363 volunteers
 - 8,770 seedlings planted in Keau'ohana
 - 168 HER Special Events
 - **Annual averages since 2014:**
 - 700 Volunteer hours by 150 volunteers
 - 370 seedlings planted
 - 18 HER Special Events
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Volunteer & Outreach Highlights

Volunteer Field Events (Chronological):

- July 13, 2024 – Koa'e Coastal Cleanup
- September 22, 2024 – Fall Equinox Planting in Keau'ohana
- October 7, 2024 – Special Ekaha Fern Planting
- December 21, 2024 – Winter Solstice Planting Celebration
- January 3, 2025 – Kirpal Meditation Retreat Volunteer Forest Day
- March 22, 2025 – Spring Equinox Forest Restoration Event
- June 16, 2025 – Hilo High School / Stantec Special Forest Event
- June 22, 2025 – Summer Solstice Planting and Invasive Control Day
- June 28, 2025 – Koa'e Coastal Cleanup and Planting

Community Outreach & Education Events (Chronological):

- July 8, 2024 – Vitousek Environmental Talks at UHH
 - July 13, 2024 – Revitalize Puna Grand Finale in Pāhoa
 - July 20, 2024 – La 'Ohana o Pohoiki Festival (Outreach Table)
 - August 8, 2024 – Kosasa Foundation CBES Grantee Forum Presentation
 - October 23, 2024 – Hawai'i Island Weed Management Forum
 - November 8, 2024 – LFWFG Visit to Kūkūau Forest with HER
 - January 26, 2025 – Ohia Love Festival and Plant Sale
 - February 7, 2025 – UHH/ TCBES Presentation
 - April 17, 2025 – Earth Day Outreach at UH Hilo
 - May 3, 2025 – Hale Hālāwai O Puna Cultural Mākeke/ Pāhoa
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Photo Highlights from FY 2024–25



HER President engages students at the Earth Day outreach table.



Crew member proudly displays a pile of removed invasive species.



Ann Kobsa with healthy native seedlings from Koa'e Nursery.



HER crew and volunteers after a productive Summer Solstice volunteer day in Keau'ohana.