

HER -- FY 2025-26 Final Report

Hawaii Environmental Restoration



Impact Statement

During FY 2025–2026, HER completed the 10th systematic restoration pass across Keau'ohana's 20-acre core site, along with several intermediate maintenance sweeps focused on caring for young seedlings in more densely planted areas. HER engaged more than 136 community members through 19 volunteer and educational events, contributing 556 volunteer hours of stewardship and planting 916 native species in support of lowland rainforest restoration and community resilience."

Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Community Engagement, Volunteerism, and Environmental Education Summary

Throughout Fiscal Year 2025–2026, Hawaii Environmental Restoration (HER) continued to expand opportunities for community members, students, professionals, and visitors to engage in the restoration and stewardship of the Keau'ohana Lowland Rainforest. Through volunteer workdays, educational events, cultural celebrations, professional trainings, and community outreach activities, HER fostered meaningful connections between people and place while advancing ecological restoration goals.

During the fiscal year, HER hosted **19 volunteer and outreach events**, including habitat restoration workdays, seasonal community plantings, educational workshops, public presentations, career fairs, cultural festivals, and stewardship training programs.

Notable volunteer and restoration events included collaborations with Hilo High School and Stantec, seasonal Solstice and Equinox plantings, Wai'ele volunteer stewardship days and beach cleanup efforts, Revitalize Puna, the Kulani Forest event, and ongoing community restoration activities within Keau'ohana. These events provided hands-on opportunities for participants to contribute directly to native forest restoration through planting, invasive species management, site maintenance, and environmental stewardship.

HER's educational mission extends beyond the boundaries of Keau'ohana. Through workshops, outreach events, guided tours, and one-on-one interactions, participants are encouraged to understand the broader impacts of vegetation choices on Hawai'i's ecosystems. Educational programming emphasizes practical, place-based solutions that empower residents to make informed decisions about the plants they cultivate in their own landscapes. By promoting awareness of invasive species, supporting the use of appropriate native and non-invasive plants, and demonstrating effective stewardship practices, HER helps create positive environmental change across the wider community.

HER also expanded its educational outreach through participation in community and university events, including the University of Hawai'i at Hilo Connection Fair, the 'Ōhi'a Love Festival, the East Hawai'i Career Expo, Earth Day celebrations at UH Hilo, and presentations to local organizations such as Rotary Club.

Additional learning opportunities were provided through collaboration with the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR), including a Rapid Ōhi‘a Death (ROD) workshop and the Forest Stewardship Leaders Program field site visit. These events connected landowners, resource professionals, and community members with practical restoration strategies while reinforcing HER's mission to promote informed vegetation management and environmental stewardship both within Keau‘ohana and throughout the broader community.

Collectively, these efforts engaged **1,033 volunteers and participants**, contributing **556 volunteer hours** toward restoration, conservation, and community stewardship initiatives. Participants assisted with the planting of **916 native trees and plants**, helping to restore critical lowland rainforest habitat while also building the knowledge and skills necessary to improve ecological outcomes across East Hawai‘i. Through outreach and educational events HER reached a broader community of up to 8,000 participants.

Beyond measurable restoration outcomes, these events fostered environmental literacy, community resilience, cultural connection, and a growing network of land stewards committed to the protection and restoration of Hawai‘i's native ecosystems. Through partnerships with schools, universities, businesses, community organizations, and individual volunteers, HER continues to demonstrate how local restoration efforts can inspire broader community action and lasting environmental stewardship.

 Second Half of 2025		
#	Date	Special Events
1	16-Jun	Hilo High School /Stantec
2	21-Jun	Summer Solstice Planting
3	28-Jun	Wai‘ele Volunteer Event
4	12-Jul	Revitalize Puna Event
5	17-Aug	Kosasa Gathering /O‘ahu
6	22-Aug	Kulani Forest Event
7	20-Sep	Hala Festival
8	21-Sep	Fall Equinox Planting
9	30-Sep	ROD Workshop in Keau‘ohana
10	21-Dec	Winter Solstice Planting

 First Half of 2026		
#	Date	Special Events
1	1-Jan	Connection UHH Fair
2	25-Jan	Ohia Love Festival
3	12-Feb	East Hawai‘i Career Expo
4	22-Apr	Earth Day UHH
5	9-May	Waiele Beach Cleanup
6	15-May	Rotary Club Presentation
7	8-Jun	Stantec LLC
8	21-Jun	Summer Solstice Event
9	26-Jun	CTAHR -- Stewardship Program



The Koa' Plant Nursery managed by Ann Kobsa donates a large portion of Keau'ohana's native seedlings; thank you Ann for your extraordinary contribution!



JB Friday and Charlotte Godfrey-Romo facilitate forest stewardship peer-to-peer learning program through the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR).



Summer Solstice volunteer planting in the forest with steady supporter Jeffrey Regan and solid crew member, Cory Edging (in the forefront).



HER new outreach and education support, Amy Miller, at UHH Earth Day with a curious minds