

For Immediate Release: November 10, 2015

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EPA awards \$91,000 to Malama Learning Center to improve environmental literacy by restoring Nanakuli Wetlands

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded an environmental education grant of \$91,000 to the Malama Learning Center located in Kapolei, Hawaii, to improve environmental literacy by restoring the Nanakuli Wetlands—commonly known in the community as “stink-pond.”

The Malama Learning Center’s project will reach at least 700 teachers, students, and community members around a shared ethic of caring for the aina (land) through engaging, hands-on education activities that contributes to a healthier environment and people. Activities include water quality monitoring, wildlife and plant assessments, and removal of invasive plants. Local schools will be used as nurseries and will grow the native Hawaiian plants used to restore the Nanakuli Wetlands. Lesson plans will also be developed to educate the students about the importance of wetlands.

“Two-thirds of the wetlands on the island of Oahu have been lost,” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. “The Malama Learning Center will help the community, students, and teachers turn the Nanakuli Wetlands into a precious community resource.”

“This grant marks the beginning of a community-based effort to take care of a once vibrant wetland in Nanakuli that has become forgotten,” said Pauline Sato, Executive & Program Director of the Malama Learning Center. “We will connect people to place, from the mountains to the sea, intertwining science with culture among youth and elders.”

EPA’s Environmental Education Local Grants Program supports environmental education projects that increase the public’s awareness and provide them with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. The EPA’s Pacific Southwest Regional Office received over 80 applications this year, and the Malama Learning Center project is one of seven projects in the Pacific Southwest Region that will receive an environmental education grant.

For more information on Environmental Education Grants, please visit: www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants

For more information on the Malama Learning Center, please visit: www.malamalarningcenter.org