

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Volunteers Invited to “Huki” Algae for Invasive Species Awareness Week**  
*Mālama Maunalua invites community members to remove alien algae and spread awareness on Hawaii’s invasive species*

**Maunalua Bay, East Oahu (Feb. 22, 2016)** – February 21 to 27 is Invasive Species Awareness Week both nationally and in the state of Hawai‘i. Mālama Maunalua, a non-profit stewardship organization, is inviting volunteers to participate in a community huki (“pull”) of invasive algae on Saturday, Feb. 27 to help remove three types of invasive alien algae in Maunalua Bay.

The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Paiko Beach in East Oahu. Volunteers will meet and depart from Kuli‘ou‘ou Beach Park located at 100 Bay Street. Parking is available at the beach park lot and on Summer Street. Contact [volunteer@malamamaunalua.org](mailto:volunteer@malamamaunalua.org) or visit <http://www.malamamaunalua.org/volunteer/sign-up/> to RSVP.

The three types of invasive algae affecting the marine ecosystem in the Bay include Gorilla Ogo, Leather Mudweed, and Prickly Seaweed, scientifically known as *Gracilaria salicornia*, *Avrainvillea amadelpha*, and *Acanthophora spicifera*. Known to be some of the greatest threats to Hawai‘i’s coral reefs and nearshore marine ecosystems, these species flourish off of an environment created by sediment and runoff from the land. As the invasive alien algae spreads, it smothers coral reefs and native algal communities, killing extensive areas of native habitat.

One of Mālama Maunalua’s key initiatives in restoring the health of Maunalua Bay has involved removing the invasive alien algae through regular volunteer-based huki. Since its founding in 2005, the organization has removed over 3.5 million pounds of invasive alien algae, and cleared 250,000 square meters of invasive species from Paiko Beach, thanks to the help of over 15,000 volunteers of students, community members, partner organizations, and businesses. Mālama Maunalua donates pulled algae to area farmers to be used as fertilizer.

**About Mālama Maunalua:** Mālama Maunalua (“Caring for Maunalua”) is a community-based non-profit stewardship organization committed to conserving and restoring a

healthy and productive Maunalua Bay. For more information, visit [www.malamamaunalua.org](http://www.malamamaunalua.org)

**About Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week (HISAW):** HISAW is organized in coordination with the U.S. National Invasive Species Awareness Week ([NISAW](#)) and regional Pacific Invasive Species Awareness efforts. HISAW seeks to promote information sharing and public engagement in what the Hawaii State Legislature has declared “the single greatest threat to Hawaii’s economy and natural environment and to the health and lifestyle of Hawaii’s people.” For more information, visit <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/hisaw/>

**About Maunalua Bay:** Maunalua Bay comprises the coastal waters from Kōpikipikiō (Black Point) to Kawaihoa (Portlock Point), forming a broad, eight-mile indentation in Oahu’s southern coastline. The land surrounding the bay was once a succession of valleys dominated by ranches, dairies and small coastal villages; today it is home to a string of Honolulu suburbs and more than 60,000 residents.

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**Media Note: Photos and b-roll of past hukis are included in the following DropBox link:** <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/t4lz1dr6p5he4jl/AACcwc4Gpko49K42IT-4wue0a?dl=0>