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Plant Extinction Prevention Program (PEPP) Volunteer Program Application for PCSU

Location/Physical Conditions: Project Description:

The Plant Extinction Prevention Program (PEPP) is dedicated to the conservation of Hawaii's rarest plants. PEPP strives to manage rare plant populations in their natural habitats by seed/propagule collections, monitoring, weed/pest control, and outplanting. This work is done by collaboration with private landowners, State and Federal agencies, researchers, and other partners. PEPP is a federally, State, and privately funded organization and is comprised of a team of dedicated, specialized botanists versed in rare plant identification and natural resources management. This program has been in existence since 2003 and has a long history of utilizing volunteers and partners from other agencies to assist in the various tasks associated with these efforts.

These tasks include hiking to rare plant populations, rare plant monitoring, assisting in seed and/or propagule collections, outplanting, and weed/pest control. Each volunteer effort will be slightly different depending on the location, the plant species we are working with that day, and the abilities, interest, and skills of the volunteer. In general, the tasks will require a certain level of physical fitness in order to hike to the field sites and also a minimum level of awareness regarding the delicate nature of working with such extremely rare plants.

Field work with the PEPP can be grueling, labor-intensive, and conducted in some of the most rugged terrain in Hawaii. For this reason volunteers should be in good physical condition and prepared, willing, and able to endure windy, rainy, cold or hot conditions. These conditions can vary by circumstance and by different target species locations. The anticipated physical conditions will be described by PEPP staff to volunteers for each trip.

Volunteer Duties:

As mentioned, volunteer efforts will differ depending on the location and the abilities, interests, and skill levels of each volunteer. All volunteers should be aware of the delicate nature of working with rare plants. There are various types of PEPP volunteers described here, based on level of skill and expertise needed.

Volunteers will be asked to hike in rugged terrain and in potentially inclement conditions. Duties may include assisting in rare plant monitoring/outplanting, pollination efforts, and weed control. Volunteers may also participate in rare plant surveys. This requires some level of skill in identifying plants in the field (skill level and appropriate volunteer participation will be determined by PEPP staff). Additionally, volunteers may be asked to assist in fence construction and may help spot plants from a safe location while PEPP staff are monitoring plants on rappel.

PEPP Volunteer Desired Skills/Abilities:

While experience is not required, it is appreciated. Volunteers for the PEPP should be interested in rare plant and native ecosystem conservation in Hawaii. PEPP is interested in volunteers who have botanical knowledge/interest and who can identify both weedy and native plant species and have experience working with rare plants in situ. PEPP is also interested in volunteers with experience in weed control techniques, pest/pathogen identification, outplanting, rare plant monitoring/research, native and non-native pollinators, ungulate control, fence construction, and use of GPS equipment.

Materials/equipment to be utilized (provided by PEPP):

PEPP will provide rare plant collection tools: plastic, mesh, or paper bags, pollen collection kit, pole pickers, weed control tools: herbicide, clippers, handsaws, rubber gloves, and other essential personal protective equipment; if chainsaws, augers, etc. are to be used, PEPP will provide ear plugs to volunteers in the area (PEPP does not allow volunteers to utilize power tools). If participating in helicopter operations, volunteers must have Interagency Aviation Training (IAT) A-100 Basic Aviation Safety certification. See this website for more details: www.iat.gov/Training/pages/online.asp. PEPP staff will provide appropriate helicopter PPE for volunteers (i.e. flight suit, helmets, gloves).

Materials/equipment to be utilized (provided by volunteer):

Volunteers should come prepared with appropriate clothing and gear for the trip (i.e. proper hiking shoes, long pants, long sleeves (depending on site), warm clothing (if needed), leather working gloves (if preferred), sufficient food/water, rain gear, eye protection, etc.). If it is a camping trip, the volunteer may be asked to bring all their own camping essentials such as tent, sleeping pad + bag, etc.

Training/orientation needed:

Safety: Volunteers will be briefed prior to trips regarding safety for the day, including location of safety kit and emergency communication devices. PEPP staff will provide and go over maps

of the area to be visited, discuss weather/conditions to be expected, and other potential hazards. If volunteers/researchers will be riding in helicopters, they will be briefed by both PEPP staff and the pilot regarding passenger protocol; PEPP staff will assist all volunteers in entering and exiting the helicopter.

Skills: Volunteers will be briefed to distinguish between the plants in the area including any target weed species and native species. Volunteers will be briefed on proper use of any tools provided and the proper way to carry them to and from the field. The volunteer is responsible to ask PEPP staff for any additional information/instruction they feel is necessary. Volunteers will be given opportunities to decline in participating in an activity if they feel they do not have the skills to do the job or uncomfortable about participating.

Volunteer Supervisors:

- Wendy Kishida, Kauai PEPP Coordinator, 808-634-0300
- Susan Ching Harbin, Oahu PEPP Coordinator, 808-295-0956
- Ane Bakutis, Molokai PEPP Coordinator 808-216-9229
- Hank Oppenheimer, Maui Nui PEPP Coordinator, 808-357-2074
- Josh VanDeMark, Big Island PEPP Coordinator, 808-268-6605