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**MARY BEGIER AND HAWAII ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTED WITH  
COMMUNITY HERO AWARDS  
HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL RECOGNIZES COMMITMENT TO MALAMA MAUNA  
KEA**

**Hilo, Hawaii**— Hawaii residents and visitors alike appreciate the wonderful diversity of life in the islands. Invasive species however, threaten this diversity and are both harmful to the environment, economy, or human health; and are not native to the area where they are a problem. Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week is intended to increase awareness of such concerns among visitors, residents, elected officials, and other community leaders while recognizing the outstanding contributions coming from all segments of society in protecting Hawaii from invasive species. Senator Malama Solomon presented Mary Begier and the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce with the 2013 Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) Community Hero Award in a ceremony on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> during the first annual Hawaii Invasive Species Council Award ceremony at the State Capitol Auditorium. The Community Hero Award recognizes a community member or community based group that has been a shining example of dedication to prevent or manage invasive species. Mary Begier and the Hawaii Island Chamber shine brightly in their commitment to help support the Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM), University of Hawaii at Hilo in its efforts to implement the Mauna Kea Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

The CMP is an integrated planning tool for resource management for the UH Management Areas on Mauna Kea including the Mauna Kea Science Reserve, the mid-level facilities at Hale Pohaku and the Summit Access Road. During the approval process of the CMP, Begier and the Chamber pledged to become more involved in community-based stewardship of Mauna Kea and assisted the OMKM by rallying its members with a call for volunteers for invasive weed pulls beginning in March 2012. Thus launching OMKM's community invasive species control program.

In 2012, the invasive weed pull program included over 110 volunteer days totaling more than 800 volunteer hours removing several hundred bags of invasive weeds (fireweed, mullein, telegraph weed, and others) from the mid-level facilities at Hale Pohaku and along the summit access road corridor.

“Stakeholder participation is critical to our programs to malama Mauna Kea and is an effective tool to help us manage the resources within UH’s managed lands on Mauna Kea. Mary Begier and the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce have supported our efforts from day one. When we started the discussion on engaging volunteers, they quickly pitched the business community and helped us raise awareness and understanding in addressing invasive species management issues,” said Office of Mauna Kea Management Director Stephanie Nagata.

“The Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce members volunteer and collaborate as advocates for those things that make Hawaii Island a great place to live,” said Vaughn Cook, HICC President. “Mary is one of those members who gets involved and keeps us all mindful of our community commitments. As a chamber, we supported the development of the CMP. Mary’s determination to help the University of Hawaii successfully manage their lands on Mauna Kea quickly spread and today, many Hawaii Island Chamber members continue to volunteer and kokua Mauna Kea.”

In total, more than thirty-seven statewide nominations, including individuals and organizations were submitted for the 2013 HISC Awards. Mary Begier, and Office of Mauna Kea Management Director Stephanie Nagata attended the award presentation.

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#### **About Hawaii Invasive Species Council**

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council was established to provide policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives for the control and eradication of harmful invasive species throughout the State of Hawaii. This is the first annual award for the HISC and was launched as part of the 2013 Hawaii Invasive Awareness Week. For more information see <http://hisaw2013.blogspot.com/p/hisc-awards.html>

#### **About Office of Mauna Kea Management**

The Office of Mauna Kea Management is charged with day-to-day management of Mauna Kea Science Reserve as prescribed in the Master Plan. The adoption of the Mauna Kea Science Reserve Master Plan by the University of Hawaii Board of Regents in June 2000 marked a

critical milestone in the management of Mauna Kea.

Meetings and public hearings spanning a period of nearly two years went into the formulation of the Master Plan, which established management guidelines for the next 20 years. The process reflected the community's deeply rooted concerns over the use of Mauna Kea, including respect for Hawaiian cultural beliefs, protection of environmentally sensitive habitat, recreational use of the mountain, and astronomy research.

The Master Plan places the focus of responsibility with the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UHH). The UH-Hilo Chancellor established the Office of Mauna Kea Management and Mauna Kea Management Board in the fall of 2000. The Mauna Kea Management Board in turn formed Kahu Ku Mauna, a council comprised of Hawaiian cultural resource persons to serve as advisors.

The mission of the Office of Mauna Kea Management is to achieve harmony, balance and trust in the sustainable management and stewardship of Mauna Kea Science Reserve through community involvement and programs that protect, preserve and enhance the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Mauna Kea while providing a world-class center dedicated to education, research and astronomy.