Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest Receives Friends of Hawaii Charities Grant

The Hawai'i Forest Institute (HFI) was awarded another grant this year from Friends of Hawaii Charities for the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest. Hawai'i Tourism Authority Aloha 'Āina Program has provided supported the project in previous years.

Community volunteers plant seedlings at the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest. April 21, 2018

The infrastructure of the Honolulu Zoo Children's Discovery Forest Upland Hawaiian Forest Zone was completed in 2015 and volunteers continue to enhance and maintain this Zone. Volunteer Coordinator Linda Duling has coordinated efforts to engage over 1,500 volunteers of all ages in maintaining the Discovery Forest and outplanting 1,120 seedlings. An additional 3,000 trees, shrubs, and ground cover were planted in the Upland Hawaiian Forest by the landscape contractor in 2015.

With assistance from HFI President Dr. Travis Idol, Linda coordinates monthly volunteer events and educational tours with youth groups. In addition to community volunteers, groups include US Navy and Marine Corp, Boy Scouts, Punahou Key Club, Hawaii Community College, Kiwanis Young Professionals, and Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind. Natural resource lesson topics include Native Hawaiian Birds, Energy & Nutrient Cycling, Kalo cultural stories and replanting guidelines, El Nino & Global Climate Change, Polynesian vs. Native Hawaiian plants identification and uses, and Island Chance paper airplane activities.

An Upland Hawaiian Forest Interpretive Sign was created in 2016 and installed at the Discovery Forest at a dedication ceremony on April 29, 2017. The sign illustration was created and generously donated by artist Gerald Mayfield and Diana Tusher donated her time to work with Lowell Gillia, Design Asylum Inc. to create the layout and design. The Wayfinder sign was funded by Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Hawai'i Community Foundation, and Friends of Hawaii Charities.

HFI formed a partnership with faculty and students at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa and the State Division of Forestry and Wildlife to improve the native plant collection and educational signs and other materials in the adjacent Kipuka Nene Exhibit to better highlight native forest bird habitat and conservation efforts. HFI President Travis Idol worked with community partners to create a "Birds of the Montane Native Forest" Interpretive Sign. Gerald Mayfield created and donated the sign illustration and Diane Tusher did the layout and design. This interpretive sign was funded by Hawai'i Tourism Authority and Friends of Hawaii Charities.

Birds of the Montane Native Forest Interpretive Sign. Illustration by Gerald Mayfield and layout and design by Diana Tusher. Funded by Hawai'i Tourism Authority and Friends of Hawaii Charities