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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK COMMUNITY INPUT ON BIG ISLAND CRITICAL HABITAT PROPOSAL

Honolulu, HI – U.S. Representative Colleen Hanabusa (HI-01), a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, announced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold an additional public informational meeting on a proposal to designate almost 19,000 acres of land on the Big Island as critical habitat. USFWS will also reopen the public comment period until September 3, 2013.

“I am pleased USFWS will continue to seek community input about this proposal and help address some of the public’s unanswered questions,” said Hanabusa. **“I had a very productive meeting with Director Dan Ashe last month about this issue, and I appreciate his support in establishing a positive relationship between USFWS and affected stakeholders. We are committed to finding a compromise that provides for our communities and protects our native species.”**

On the Big Island, USFWS has proposed designating approximately 18,766 acres of land as critical habitat for three endangered plant species. More than 1/3 of the proposed lands are in private ownership and about 12,000 acres are owned by the State of Hawaii.

A public meeting was held on May 15, 2013, but interested parties were left with unanswered questions and concerns. **The newly announced second meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 7, 2013 at the West Hawaii Civic Center from 3-5 p.m.**

For more information about the critical habitat proposal and the draft economic analysis, click here: <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>.

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