

**News from the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance**

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Lee-Ann Choy, Pacific Rim Concepts LLC 808 864 9812**

**Hawai'i Conservation Week 2007 and the 15<sup>th</sup> Hawai'i Conservation Conference**

## **Governor Lingle presents 25 *My Hawai'i* Awards**

**August 2, 2007**

On July 25, 2007 Governor Linda Lingle presented awards to the best 25 student stories about the Hawaiian environment. The winners were Colin Berton, Malia Brennan, Amber Burgess, Kiara Chong, Sheena Choy, Brandon Finger, Casie Gaza, Jamie Higa, Matthew Hino, Caitlin Hooker, Sara Ann Ishii, Monique Ishikawa, Kienen Koga, Evon Le, Keelee Martin, Anela Minuth, Sarah Murayama, Jacie Okamoto, Dylan Pavao, Amelia Scoyni, Cadie Shimabukuro, Tiffany Takeda, and Derin Young. They each received a personal Commendation from Governor Lingle, copies of "*My Hawai'i Story Project 2007 An Anthology*", a environmental book from Barnes and Noble Booksellers, David Helvarg's "50 Ways to Save the Ocean", and many items of conservation interest from the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance partners.

The My Hawai'i winners participated in a Nature Writers Workshop on Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at the Hawai'i Convention Center. The students heard how science journalist Jan TenBruggencate (Honolulu Advertiser), ocean journalist David Helvarg (Blue Frontier Campaign) and storywriter Kimo Armitage (University of Hawai'i) became writers and where they get their inspiration.

Students coming from off-island were flown to O'ahu with accommodation also paid by the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation. The printing of the "*My Hawai'i Story Project 2007 An Anthology*" was sponsored by the Rotary Club of West Honolulu, Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation, the Pacific Writers' Connection and the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation.

The My Hawai'i project is an education outreach endeavor for Middle and Intermediate school students statewide to express in a 1,000-word essay, their thoughts and feelings about Hawai'i's natural environment. The My Hawai'i project is planned to be run annually each Spring by the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation and the Pacific Writers' Connection, with awards being presented during Conservation Week at the Annual Hawai'i Conservation Conference each July.

In 2007 a total of 321 entries were received from students attending 45 schools from four islands, O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i. The My Hawai'i stories were assessed by a panel of 33 reviewers against eight predetermined selection criteria, tallying 100 points. The reviewers had no access to the names of students, nor the schools they attended.

Exceptional stories were then re-assessed to find the best 25. These were then published as “*My Hawai‘i Story Project 2007 An Anthology.*”

A favorite theme was the sea, and particularly honu and monk seals getting caught in marine debris. Another was sewage spills and fish swimming through the sludge (ugh!). Clearly the campaigns and news events of 2007 have made their mark. On dry land the themes revolved mostly around human destruction of the native environment, lack of stewardship of the forest, and allowing weeds and pests to push native species to the brink of extinction.

The Hawai‘i Conservation Alliance is an cooperative conservation partnership of 15 organizations involved in natural resource management, conservation biology research, and training programs in Hawai‘i and U.S. Territories in the Pacific Basin. Its members include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Sanctuaries; National Park Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resource Conservation Service; U.S. Department of Defense Army Garrison Hawai‘i Natural Resources Program; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge Complex; U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resource Discipline; Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources; Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife; University of Hawai‘i at Hilo College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management; University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Center for Conservation Research and Training; Kamehameha Schools; Office of Hawaiian Affairs and The Nature Conservancy Hawai‘i.