

**Legislative Federal Economic Stimulus Program Oversight Commission**  
**Act 150, Session Laws of Hawaii 2009**  
**DEPARTMENT/AGENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**NOAA**  
**14 September 2010**

1. For each group/category or program/project for which ARRA funds have been obtained, please provide the following information:

(a) A brief summary of the program/project, including goals;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The Pacific Regional Center's (PRC) Main Facility is the final major construction phase of NOAA's PRC project. NOAA is partnering with the Navy to redevelop existing federal facilities in Hawaii to modernize and consolidate NOAA's programs supporting management of marine ecosystems, ocean, coastal, and weather and climate prediction programs in the Pacific. The Center's Main Facility will encompass over 300,000 square feet of lab and office space in two renovated World War II-era hangars and a third, new building that together will realize NOAA's goal of an integrated facility. There are currently approximately 600 NOAA employees/contractors in Hawaii. The Pacific Regional Center enables NOAA to consolidate its operations and move out of buildings that are in many instances overcrowded or have outlived their useful lives. By bringing the programs together into one facility, NOAA expects to realize benefits in improved operations and mission performance, longer-term operational savings, and opportunities for greater program collaboration and synergy-both within NOAA and with external partners. The Center reflects sustainable design principles, and is targeted for the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification.

**Pelekane Bay Restoration Project:** The overall goal of the Pelekane Bay Watershed Restoration Project is to reduce the amount of sediment being washed into Pelekane Bay from the upland watershed. The objectives of the project fall into three areas: 1) reduce the impact of feral goats by fencing and animal control (trapping, shooting) 2) mitigate sediment movement from severely eroded areas into the bay by constructing sediment check dams, applying erosion control fabric and re-establishing grass cover; and 3) restore native plant communities along two stream corridors.

**Maunalua Bay Restoration Project:** This Maunalua Bay project is restoring coral reefs through manual removal of invasive alien algae from 22 acres of nearshore waters. The restored sand bottom and hard substrate habitat will enable seagrass expansion and coral recruitment. The project will provide significant ecological benefits and transform existing small-scale community removal efforts already underway into a large-scale removal model. Local communities will experience first-hand how their efforts can succeed at a larger and more biologically meaningful scale, while also employing Bay

residents and engaging a larger proportion of businesses and families in stewardship of the Bay.

- (b) Whether funds were appropriated for expenditure by a federal agency, were awarded as a formula/block grant to a State or county agency, or were awarded on a competitive grant basis;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The ARRA funds were appropriated for expenditure by a federal agency.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Both projects, among a total of 50 projects nationwide, were awarded on a competitive grant basis.

- (c) Whether matching funds are required, and, if so: (i) Are they available; (ii) Have they been secured; (iii) If they have not been secured, why not; and (iv) Will the State be required to continue that match or provide increased/full funding in the future;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** No matching funds are required.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** No matching funds are required.

- (d) If there are additional requirements to receive funds, what are they;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** No additional requirements exist.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** No additional requirements exist.

- (e) The amount of funds involved and the state/federal fiscal year within which the funds must be expended (e.g. SFY 2009-2010 or FFY 2009-2010);

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** \$142 million were appropriated under the NOAA ARRA Spending Plan for the Pacific Regional Center. To date, contract awards totaling \$131.9 million have been made. Remaining contract awards must be made by September 30, 2010 (FY 2010)

**Pelekane Bay Restoration Project:** Project Cost: \$2,905,065 (NOAA ARRA Award) + \$134,000 (Match) = \$3,039,065;

**Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Project Cost: \$3,408,808 (NOAA ARRA Award)

Combined, the two Hawaii restoration projects were funded by NOAA for a total of \$6,313,873; funds must be expended no later than September 30, 2015.

- (f) What criteria were used to identify the program/project as a priority and how does the program/project meet them;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** NOAA had several “shovel-ready” construction projects that required funding to proceed with construction. The Pacific Regional Center project was a “shovel-ready” construction project.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** The following criteria were provided to all prospective applicants in the original Federal Funding Opportunity. The Maunalua Bay Restoration Project and Pelekane Bay Restoration Project were among the 50 applications that best met these criteria out of the over 800 proposals reviewed.

Reviewers assigned scores to applications ranging from 0 to 50 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria:

*Importance and Applicability* – ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and relevance to NOAA’s mission, and related Federal, regional, state or local activities. This included: the potential of a project to readily maximize jobs created or maintained; shovel-readiness; project sustainability; and impact to the short- and long-term economic condition of an area (e.g., increased fisheries benefits, increased tourism and recreation, etc.).

*Technical/Scientific Merit* - assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. Specifically this included: how realistic an implementation plan was provided; project’s feasibility from a **socioeconomic** perspective (i.e., the likelihood that a project is able to meet stated job targets); project’s feasibility from a **biological and engineering** perspective; and whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe, and uses appropriate methods and personnel.

*Overall Qualifications of Applicants* - ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed work

*Project Costs* - evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. Specifically this included: whether the proposed budget is cost-effective and realistic, based on the applicant’s stated objectives, time frame, and amount of overall project budget already secured from other sources; percentage of overall request going to on-the-ground restoration (as opposed to general program support/overhead/travel); the level of budget detail; and inclusion of matching contributions.

*Outreach and Education* - assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. Specifically, this included: inclusion of plans to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners, jobs created or maintained; sources of funding and other support provided; and the potential for the proposed project to encourage future restoration and protection of marine and coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities.

- (g) Efforts undertaken to coordinate application for funds and administration of the program/project, including expenditure of funds, with other federal, state, and county agencies;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** Not applicable.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Both awarded projects provided letters of support from the State of Hawai'i with their original proposals, clearly expressing support for ARRA-funded activity in Maunalua and Pelekane, respectively. Both projects were required by law to gain all State and County permits and approvals (e.g. Right of Entry Permits for work on or across State lands) which occurred before project activities commenced, indicating further implied support for the projects.

- (h) The criteria used to select activities for the program/project;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** Not applicable.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Please see above (1(f)) for programmatic criteria for project selection.

- (i) Efforts made to provide public notice and seek public comment/input or, if public comment/input was not sought, why;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The construction contract, awarded on August 31, 2010, was conducted through a competitive process, with public notices published in *Federal Business Opportunities*.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** A Federal Register Notice (FRN) was published on March 6, 2009 to notify the public of this financial assistance opportunity [74 FR 9793]. A Full Funding Opportunity (FFO # NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2009-2001709) was posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) entitled "NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act."

- (j) Efforts made during the bidding/award process to ensure that it was transparent and that the funds were awarded based on merit and in a prompt, fair, and reasonable manner;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The construction contract, awarded on August 31, 2010, was conducted through a competitive process, with public notices published in *Federal Business Opportunities*.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** The solicitation, competitive review and award process was developed with utmost attention to transparency. Over 800 applications were fully evaluated using the rigorous criteria described above. Per standard process for competitive grant reviews, proposals were reviewed by a minimum of three and up to nine technical experts from throughout NOAA.

- (k) Measures employed to: (1) reduce duplication of efforts, (2) ensure that funds were used for authorized purposes, and (3) prevent cost overruns, fraud, waste, error, and abuse;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The Naval Facilities Engineering Command – Pacific and NOAA monitor contractor expenditures to ensure funds are used only for authorized purposes and to prevent fraud, waste, error, and abuse.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Oversight of NOAA awards includes three components: 1) oversight of the work in the field, conducted by a NOAA technical monitor in the region; 2) oversight and assistance with administrative elements of awards by a headquarters based Federal Program Officer, who works with the recipient during the application and post-award phase; and 3) oversight by NOAA Grants Specialists that take a particularly hard look at the financial aspects of the awards to ensure that funds are used for activities that are necessary, allowable, and allocable to ensure compliance with Office of Management and Budget circulars.

ARRA recipients were briefed by NOAA staff on how to detect and report waste, fraud and abuse, as outlined by the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General (OIG). Pursuant to Federal Register Notice (75 FR 5765) on February 4, 2010, NOAA reserved approximately 3% of the total NOAA Habitat Recovery Act fund to supplement projects as needed. The Pelekane project was awarded supplemental funds to provide irrigation to out planted vegetation due to the severe drought conditions impacting the region during the critical planting season, and to establish an in-water baseline monitoring program, so as to provide a benchmark for comparison to future monitoring efforts, with the overall goal of measuring the effectiveness of the restoration over time.

- (l) Current status of the program/project, including percentage of awarded funds that have been obtained, percentage of awarded funds encumbered and/or expended, and what parts) of program/project have been completed;

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** The Pacific Regional Center – Main Facility construction contract was awarded to Walsh Construction Company, Chicago, Illinois on August 31, 2010.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** Pelekane Bay received \$2,905,065 total (\$2,695,737 initial grant award, \$209,328 for the supplemental award) and has expended \$2,129,506, as of August 26, 2010.

Maunalua Bay has expended \$1,075,871 of their award as of August 27, 2010. Maunalua has, to date, created over 35 FTE jobs for this restoration work. Over 945,000 pounds of invasive algae has been removed (equating to 6.92 acres) from the reef at Kuli'ou'ou.

- (m) Actual or anticipated economic impact to the State of the program/project, including the number of jobs saved/created and the long-term public benefits of the program/project.

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** In the short term, from a jobs perspective, we expect the award of the construction contract to bring over \$132 million and 1320 construction jobs to the labor market in Hawaii. Over the long-term, having a world-class science and research facility located in Hawaii is expected to further promote international scientific and local educational partnerships. This world class facility is expected to aide in recruiting the next generation of scientists and researchers to work on the critical science issues facing the Nation and the Pacific region in the future.

**Pelekane Bay Restoration Project:** Socio-economic outcomes for this project include the creation of 18 new jobs, and training of 15 new field personnel, who will gain skills in conservation field work that can be applied to future restoration projects. The recipient, The Kohala Center, asserts that communities surrounding the watershed will benefit from improved coastal habitats, fisheries, cultural sites, and tourism.

**Maunalua Bay Restoration Project:** In addition to the 75 positions created and/or maintained, the recipient, The Nature Conservancy, is measuring the social and economic impact of the proposed project at two stages during the project timeline: immediately prior to project implementation (month 1), and immediately prior to completion of the invasive algae extraction contract (month 14). Because there are distinct economic and social attributes associated with the intended project impact, two sets of indicators are being measured during these two periods: 1) a set of 2 economic indicators, and; 2) a set of 7 socio-cultural indicators. Methods of measurement for both sets of indicators would follow the international standards set forth under the IUCN/GCRMN "Socioeconomic Manual for Coral Reef Management" (Bunce et al. 2000), including both individual and focus group survey instruments. In addition, all nine socioeconomic indicators measured would track against and follow guidance outlined under "SEM-Pasifika: Socioeconomic Monitoring Guidelines for Coastal Managers in Pacific Island Countries" (Wongbusarakum and Pomeroy 2008).

2. For other programs/projects, if ARRA funds, such as competitive grants, were available for a program/project but were not sought or were denied, please briefly describe why the funds were not sought or why they were denied.

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** Not Applicable

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:** With over 800 applications requesting more than \$3 billion, and only \$160 million for habitat restoration, only 50 projects were awarded with the \$160 million NOAA had available for grants through this program. Projects were awarded based on the criteria provided here. Because of the limited funding compared to the amount requested for projects, many projects did not receive funding.

3. Please describe: (a) Any legal/operational barriers/constraints encountered in the award, receipt, encumbrance, or expenditure of funds, including procurement, late/delayed federal guidance, and reporting requirements; (b) The effect of those barriers/constraints; and (c) If and how they were mitigated.

**NOAA Pacific Regional Center:** Not Applicable.

**Pelekane Bay and Maunalua Bay Restoration Projects:**

*(a) Any legal/operational barriers/constraints encountered in the award, receipt, encumbrance, or expenditure of funds, including procurement, late/delayed federal guidance, and reporting requirements;*

There were no legal or operational barriers or constraints encountered in the provision and administration of these two awards. NOAA provided assistance to recipients on reporting requirements, such as those for [FederalReporting.gov](http://FederalReporting.gov).

The USFWS was consulted for potential effects to the Hawaiian Hoary Bat related to Pelekane Bay Restoration Project activities (concerns of bat entrapment in barbed wire fencing—a means to stop feral ungulate access to restoration areas). The formal consultation delayed project activities for approximately 3 months.

No significant delays were encountered for the Maunalua project.

*(b) The effect of those barriers/constraints;*

The effect of the formal consultation was a delay in project implementation and loss of field restoration crew time toward fencing until the consultation was completed.

*(c) If and how they were mitigated.*

The Pelekane Bay Restoration Project recipient received a supplemental award to help support extra crew time (in light of time lost during the consultation), among other project activities,

including a temporary irrigation system in light of severe drought this past winter, and additional funds to implement an in-water monitoring program to gauge the effectiveness of their restoration efforts in the lower watershed to Pelekane Bay itself.