

Reforestation Project

Friends of Hakalau Forest has partnered with the Refuge to accelerate the reforestation of pasturelands on the Refuge. We provided \$185,000 earlier this year from the funds we raised with our “Save Our Seedling” campaign that began in early 2025. Once again, the generosity of our membership and many others who care about Hakalau Forest has come through in amazing fashion. The accompanying figure shows where the Refuge staff and our volunteers have been focusing 2026 planting efforts. Each of the individual blue polygons are plots where planting is ongoing along the mauka border of the Refuge. We need this green break to help protect the refuge from fire (note the footprint of the November 2025 Mana Road fire). This is also prime habitat space we are racing to restore.



The target out-planting number for this year was 10,000 trees and the Refuge was on track to reach that target until Hurricane Lala disrupted operations. We have currently canceled our volunteer activities through the end of September due to unsafe conditions and impassable roads. It looks like we'll end up with roughly 8,500-9,000 trees out-planted this year.

The 2027 out-planting target is 15,000-20,000 seedlings of different species and 2028 is 25,000-30,000. If all goes according to plan, by 2028, the Refuge staff believe they will be maxed out on what can realistically get planted in a single year with the staff and volunteers that they currently have.

This has been a big year for volunteers on the refuge; we've had close to 600 volunteers contributing almost 8000 service hours and that's even without any post Lala volunteers. When it's all said and done, the Refuge will have facilitated 60 volunteer groups, and their total hours add up to \$243,422 of labor.

Our community volunteers are absolutely amazing and passionate folks and over the years they are the one of the most critical driving forces behind what makes Hakalau Forest so special. But...when you look at the map of the plots and see how much more restoration needs to be done for our birds, we are in a race against time. We need more upper elevation habitat now and we are working our absolute hardest. Our FOHF Board of Directors is keenly aware of this need, and we are exploring ideas to accelerate reforestation. We will keep you updated on our progress