7 February 2005

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Ala Wai Canal, Oahu, Hawaii

1. Purpose: To provide information on the subject project.

2. Points of Major Interest and Facts.

a. Feasibility study activities for the Ala Wai canal project started following the signing of the Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Hawaii, January 2001. The watershed analysis identified possible restoration alternatives in the upper watershed. Flood control features continue to be developed. The alternatives analysis was initiated. The study is scheduled for completion in late 2006.

b. The Ala Wai canal project is a multiple purpose project being investigated under Section 209 of the Flood Control Act of 1962 (Public Law 87-874) and currently in the feasibility phase. The feasibility study, estimated at $1.5M, is investigating and evaluating solutions to environmental degradation and flood control problems throughout the Manoa, Palolo, and Makiki drainages, including the Ala Wai canal and golf course areas. The project is sponsored by the State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Land Division. Pending analysis of alternative in the study, the potential construction costs were not developed.

c. The Ala Wai canal is a two-mile long man-made waterway constructed during the 1920's to create and protect the Waikiki area on the island of Oahu. The Ala Wai watershed encompasses more than 16 square miles. The carrying capacity of the canal has been significantly reduced by accumulation of silt and debris from the Manoa, Palolo, and Makiki drainage areas in recent years, thereby increasing the potential flood risk to the Waikiki area. During the November 1965 and December 1967 storms and passage of Hurricane Iniki in 1992, the Ala Wai Canal was overtopped causing flooding in the Waikiki district. The 30 October 2004 storm in Manoa, that is estimated to have caused over $100M in damages to property and irreplaceable documents in the University of Hawaii's library, has caused the community and agencies to seek the expansion of the Ala Wai Canal Project to more purposefully investigate flood mitigation measures in the upper stream areas. Efforts are underway by all parties to expand the Project and secure additional funding.

d. The Ala Wai canal also serves as an important link between the freshwater ecosystems of the upper drainage basins and the marine environment along the coast. Endemic amphidromous species such as native gobies and shrimp that had once utilized the Ala Wai canal as a migratory pathway from the mountains to the sea are nearly non-existent. The accumulation of silt and pollutants over the years has restricted water flow and circulation resulting in the steady decline in water quality.