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DLNR PARTNERS WITH UH AND ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

HONOLULU — The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) announced today that it has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Attorney General’s Office, the Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative, and the University of Hawaii School of Law’s Environmental Law Program, that will create a new one-year law fellowship to enhance enforcement of Hawaii’s environmental laws.

Funded by the Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative (HCRI), the law fellow will work directly with the DLNR’s Division of Aquatic Resources and focus on prosecuting violators of the State’s laws that protect marine resources.

UH Law Graduate Blaine Rogers, who received his J.D. degree in May and his Certificate in Environmental Law at the William S. Richardson School of Law, will be the first DLNR law fellow.

Rogers, who began the position full-time on October 16, 2006, commented: “I am delighted that, right out of law school, I can help protect Hawaii’s fragile marine environment by assisting in bringing the most flagrant violators to justice.

“By working closely with the experienced staff of DLNR, I hope to ensure that their hard work in conserving our natural resources is not undone by those who dare to break the law,” Rogers said.
Agencies partner to establish environmental law fellowship in DLNR

Peter Young, DLNR chairperson added, “The new fellowship will increase our capacity to prosecute administrative and judicial violations of Hawaii’s environmental laws.”

“By having a lawyer ‘in house’ working side-by-side with our management and staff, we will have a new ability to move violations through the system to either the Board of Land and Natural Resources or the courts. We hope that these cases – whether it’s illegal fish poaching or stealing precious coral —will send a message: violators will be prosecuted,” Young said.

State Attorney General Mark Bennett noted, “The innovative fellowship within DLNR, but under the supervision of our experienced team of deputy attorneys general who focus on natural resources protection, effectively expands the legal resources available to the State.”

“This DLNR fellowship is an exciting example of how our nationally recognized Environmental Law Program directly serves Hawaii. By creatively connecting our top law students with the Attorney General’s office, HCRI, and DLNR, we enhance our students’ career opportunities and fill an important public need at the same time. We look forward to many more years of this new partnership,” said UH Law School Dean Avi Soifer.

The Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative was established in 1998 with federal funds to support scientific research and monitoring to protect Hawaii’s coral ecosystems. HCRI projects seek to enhance research, monitoring, education, management, and regulatory programs in Hawaii.

For more information about HCRI, contact Risa Minato at 277-4710, and visit www.hcri.hawaii.edu

For more information, contact:
Deborah Ward
DLNR Public Information Specialist
Phone: (808) 587-0320

Denise Antolini, Director
Environmental Law Program, UH Law School
www.hawaii.edu/elp
Phone: (808) 956-6238