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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HGEA and DLNR join together in planting rare Haleakala Silversword**

Volunteers from Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA) Maui Community Action Committee will be teaming up with the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to transplant about 100 rare Haleakala Silverswords on Saturday, March 2, 2013. Their efforts will help to increase this threatened species population by *outplanting* within the State Forest Reserve.

Before Silverswords were officially named a "threatened species" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1992, they were driven to near extinction from excessive grazing by cattle and goats, as well as other human influences.

"This is the second year we have chosen this project as a way to give back to our community," said Debra Kaiwi, Maui Island Division's Community Action Committee Chair. "Our members enjoy this activity because it gives them a hands-on opportunity with immediate results in helping to preserve our natural resources and our environment."

HGEA members and DLNR staff will be prepping and planting Silverswords propagated by the National Park Service.

If your community group is interested in native planting projects, contact Forester Lance DeSilva (873-3980) of DLNR's Maui Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

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#### **About HGEA**

HGEA was founded in 1934 to ensure fair and equitable representation for government employees. HGEA is the largest labor union in Hawaii, with more than 42,000 members. HGEA represents state and county employees in seven bargaining units. HGEA also serves a large associate membership composed primarily of retirees, other state and county employees and officials, and federal and private sector employees.