Chief Brown's Thoughts on the Partnership

As we enter the seventh year of the Inventory and Monitoring Program (I&M) conducting on-the-ground monitoring work at Haleakalā National Park (HALE), the collaborative partnership between the Program and the Park has never been stronger.

I&M began monitoring water quality and freshwater animals at Haleakalā NP several years ago. Since then, we've completed rounds of landbirds monitoring, and focal terrestrial plant communities and established invasive plants monitoring. Of course, we can't forget the inventories we've partnered on through the years with the intensive vegetation mapping inventory to be completed this year.

The data collected during the first rounds of monitoring establishes a strong baseline (the Park has already received the Technical Report from our initial Landbirds Survey) that will enable Park managers to look for resource changes and trends for decades to come. The Park is seeing an immediate benefit from the close integration of the I&M and Park programs.

Early on in the partnership it was clear that I&M and Park staff would have to work closely together due to the logistical challenges of working in the rugged HALE environment, where many areas are only accessible by helicopter, and the weather is rarely cooperative.

Whether it was having Park staff accompany I&M staff into the field, or reassigning Park staff to new I&M positions, the collection of data gave team members the opportunity to visit areas of the Park that hadn't been visited in 15+ years. These new field observations help managers make decisions regarding the allocation of limited resources, and help set priorities for our multi-year funding requests.

The work of the I&M and Park teams even contributed to HALE being awarded a $750,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to fence and restore newly acquired land on the leeward side of Haleakalā.

In addition to the positive impact on HALE's resources, the I&M team also has a positive impact on Park visitors. As a uniformed presence in the Park, I&M staff field hundreds of questions from visitors. I&M teams are able to educate the public about the work they are doing, and about the natural and cultural resources of the Park.

I&M team members are also invaluable at helping the Park take care of our visitors. From the Aquatic Team assisting a visitor with a badly injured ankle, to the Vegetation Team providing crucial backcountry support during a multi-day Search-and-Rescue for a missing hiker, the I&M commitment to preparedness and safety continues to benefit all aspects of Park operations.

By working cohesively as one team (at times it is difficult to remember who is working for the Park and who is working for I&M) the Inventory and Monitoring Program is positively contributing to the current management of Haleakalā, and setting the groundwork for a long-term, productive partnership.

—Matt Brown, NPS HALE
Resources Mgmt. Chief