



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
April 19, 2010

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Local Filmmakers to Begin Historic Nationwide Tree Planting Tour and Documentary Project

"Plant a Wish" Project Launches on Earth Day, April 22nd

Makawao, April 19 – Just in time for Earth Day (April 22nd), local production company Noni Films will launch Plant a Wish, a nation-wide road tripping, tree planting documentary project which emphasizes the importance of planting native trees. When the project is complete, the company's lead filmmakers Joseph Imhoff and Sara Tekula will become the first people in history to plant native trees in all 50 U.S. states, and will release a feature documentary film to tell the tale. As the project unfolds, the traveling duo will use social media platforms to offer daily, near-real time updating to their online blog, as well as their Twitter and Facebook accounts.

The tour launches on Maui at a private home in Olinda with the planting of a rare sandalwood tree, which will be filmed along with interviews with Hawaiian native plant experts and local land stewards. The first round of filming will continue through June, when the filmmaking duo will fly to the mainland U.S. and take a road-trip through the Midwestern and Northeastern United States, aiming to plant a native tree in 22 states ranging from as far west as Minnesota to Maine in the far northeast. (The full list of locations is available on their website.)

The Plant a Wish project founders will connect with local land stewards and tree experts along the way, highlighting the work they do and examining the issues they are facing such as urban sprawl, clear cutting, and strip mining. Later on this year, the filmmakers will take another trip to the Southwest to cover that region, and so on. They estimate the film will take two years to complete.

"In order to reach our goal, we'll take several trips to the mainland U.S., and visit the country regionally," said Sara Tekula. "We have to do it this way, since each region has its own planting and growing seasons. We don't just want to plant trees, we want to make sure we plant the right trees in the right place, and at the right time."

Noni Films is an eco-conscious production company on Maui owned and operated by Imhoff and Tekula, a married couple known around the island for their annual live, native Christmas tree project, as well as their media making efforts. Tekula is a published journalist and former TV documentary producer, while Imhoff is the Outreach Coordinator for Skyline Eco-Adventures, a zipline company known for its support of land restoration and watershed preservation on Maui. The two share a passion for filmmaking and for trees, and plant a tree for every media project they complete.

“Beside the fact that I love planting trees, as a business owner and consumer I feel it's my responsibility to give back to the land,” said Imhoff. “After all, we take from it any time we eat food, use electricity, fuel, or water. I can't wait to plant native trees all around America – what an adventure.”

Imhoff and Tekula emphasize that they will be planting *native* trees everywhere they go during the tour due to native trees' unique ability to adapt to the locations they evolved in over thousands of years. They say that after the first few years, native trees require little to no maintenance or watering, while non-natives can throw the ecosystem out of balance and may require a lot of energy to maintain.

To offset the costs of their project, Imhoff and Tekula plan to rely heavily on the kindness of friends and family for lodging, and are seeking sponsors that will support the costs of travel, which they intend to keep as eco-friendly as possible. Interested community members can join the Plant a Wish social networks, at www.facebook.com/PlantAWish or at <http://www.twitter.com/PlantAWish>

To become a sponsor, or for more information, please call Plant a Wish at 250-4030 or visit the website, <http://www.plantawish.org/>

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About Plant a Wish:

Plant a Wish is a public awareness campaign aiming to restore native habitats around America, while engaging communities and inspiring individuals to take an active role in the health of their environment. Starting on Earth Day 2010, two Maui filmmakers launch a nationwide tour of America's forests, meeting incredible caretakers along the way, becoming the first to plant native trees in each of the 50 states, learning the stories of the trees, blogging about their daily experiences, and collecting footage for a feature-length documentary film. They do all of this to fulfill their biggest wish: for future generations to enjoy healthy communities with an abundance of biodiversity, native plants and trees, fresh air, and clean water. Check out <http://www.plantawish.org/> to learn more, to contribute or get involved.