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Maui Filmmakers Gear Up to Complete 50-State Native Tree Planting Tour and Documentary Project

Final Leg of 'Plant a Wish' Tour Scheduled for September 2011

Makawao, HI July 13 – The Maui-based founders of [Plant a Wish](http://plantawish.org) have announced the upcoming conclusion of their mission to plant native trees in all 50 U.S. States. Filmmakers Joseph Imhoff and Sara Tekula are scheduled to begin the final phase of the project in September. The duo is now scheduling tree planting events with communities in [8 mainland states](#), which will bring their overall total to 49 – just one state shy of their goal. The grand finale of their 50-state tour is a State-wide community effort, attempting a record for the most people planting native Hawaiian trees on one day in Hawaii, Arbor Day, November 5th.

The husband and wife team first announced the Plant a Wish project on Earth Day 2010, with the pair soon after planting trees in 23 states in the mid-west and northeast in June and July of the same year. In Spring 2011, they signed with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor, From the Heart Productions, and held native tree planting events in another 18 states, cross-crossing the southern U.S. to bring them to their current total of 41 states. In addition, the Plant a Wish adventure is the subject of the team's first feature film, to be completed through their production company Noni Films in early 2012. They released [the first official trailer](#) for this film in June.

“Our message encourages the understanding, protection, and restoration of local native habitat and biodiversity, and our project is a truly organic, collaborative approach,” says Tekula. “We couldn't do this without the huge national network of support we've been able to attract to our mission.”

The duo – like many modern-day filmmakers - depends largely on online technology to raise production funds and social media sites like [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to promote their efforts and connect with national nonprofit organizations, tree nurseries and citizens to arrange tree planting events in each location along their tour. At the self-organized tree plantings, local participants are asked to write wishes on small scraps of recycled paper and then plant them under a carefully selected tree native to their location – hence the name, “Plant a Wish”.

“The planting of written wishes under trees began as something special we had our guests do at our wedding on Maui in 2007,” says Imhoff. “As we've encouraged random people to plant their wishes with us along the tour, we've all come to see these actions as a symbol of our connection to nature. Those trees are special to the communities we visit because of that personal gesture they've made.”

Early this September, Imhoff and Tekula will journey to the mainland U.S. to document their final tour, this time including tree planting events in the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. They will also re-visit California, with a second planting in the popular redwood forest of the northern part of the state. (The full list of locations is [available on their website](#).)

The couple will again use their media skills to document the stories of local land stewards and tree experts along the way, highlighting the work they do and examining what Imhoff cites as “the issues

we are all facing such as climate change, urban sprawl, decreasing biodiversity, and various man-made industrial impacts on nature.”

Imhoff and Tekula will be planting native trees exclusively during the tour because “native trees have the unique ability to adapt to the locations they evolved in over thousands of years, and bring a lot of benefits to the local ecosystem” says Tekula.

Imhoff adds, “Our home state of Hawaii has been called the ‘*posterchild for extinction*’ by several experts we’ve met on tour. Native trees need to be returned to all of our landscapes if we want the land to sustain us, and we’ve been sharing that message with everyone we meet along the way. Many people agree that lessons learned in Hawaii can be used change the world.”

Interested supporters and fans can follow their blog at www.plantawish.org/blog, and join the Plant a Wish social networks, at www.facebook.com/PlantAWish or at www.twitter.com/PlantAWish

To become a tour sponsor, or for more information, please call Plant a Wish at 808-250-4030 or visit the website, www.plantawish.org

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Plant a Wish is a native tree planting awareness project founded in Hawaii that brings local communities together, holds hands-on native tree planting ceremonies in all [50 states](#), and culminates in an informative and fun documentary film planned for widespread distribution. The project's producers accomplish this by [going on tour](#) and organizing planting events around the country. For more information, and to follow the tour, visit <http://www.plantawish.org/>