

THE LEADERSHIP OF U-S ARMY HAWAII IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO WORK WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. WITH THAT IN MIND ENGINEERS FROM SCHOFIELD BARRACKS TEAMED UP WITH STATE WORKERS TO RID A NEAR BY LAKE OF A DEADLY GREEN MONSTER. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ HAS THE STORY.

WHEN THE ARMY FIRST STARTED CLEANING UP LAKE WILSON YOU COULD BARELY SEE THE WATER. A DEADLY FERN CALLED SALVINIA MOLESTA COVERED 95 PERCENT OF THE LAKE.

“IT KILLS ALL THE LIFE AROUND IT....IT’S A BAD ALGAE YOU REALLY DON’T WANT IN YOUR LAKE ... YOU CAN HAVE YOUR GOOD ALGAE AND YOUR BAD ALGAE. THIS IS THE TYPE THAT SUFFOCATES THE MARINE LIFE DOWN THERE.”

LOCATED JUST A FEW HUNDRED FEET FROM SCHOLFIELD BARRACKS, LAKE WILSON IS HAWAII’S LARGEST BODY OF FRESH WATER. ITS CLEAN UP IS A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN THE STATE OF HAWAII AND THE ARMY.

“WE’RE TRYING TO GET THE MOST THE BIGGEST PARTS OF IT AND THEN THE CIVILIANS WILL COME IN AND SPRAY IT, THE LITTLE BITS ON THE SIDE, BUT WE’RE TRYING TO GET THE MAJORITY OF IT FOR THEM.”

BLAKE SAYS, WITH THEIR HEAVY EQUIPMENT THESE SOLDIERS CAN MOVE UP TO 5- HUNDRED 40 CUBIC YARDS OF SALVINIA A DAY. ACCORDING TO LOCAL OFFICIALS THE ARMY'S INVOLVEMENT HELPED KEEP THE COST OF THE PROJECT DOWN TO AROUND 1 AND A QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS.

“OH A BIG HELP. IF YOU GUYS WASN'T HERE WE'D BE NOT EVEN HALF-WAY THROUGH, BECAUSE ITS INCREDIBLE RIGHT NOW. JUST THIS ONE AREA WE GOTT'A CLEAR OUT NOW.”

FOR THE SOLDIERS THIS MISSION IS A LOT LIKE THE SALVINIA. ON THE SURFACE IT'S OBVIOUSLY A CLEAN UP OPERATION, BUT BELOW ITS ROOTS BIND THE ARMY AND THE COMMUNITY.

“...WE DO USE THE RESOURCES AND WE ARE PART OF THE COMMUNITY. SO WHEN TASKING LIKE THESE COME DOWN IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEND AN HELPING HAND TO SHOW THAT WE'RE NOT JUST TAKING, WE'RE GIVING BACK.”

JAVIER HERNANDEZ, OAHU, HAWAII.