



# Ka Wai Ola

NEWS FOR THE LĀHUI

kawaiola.news

## HALEAKALĀ We Have Awakened

PAGES 17-19

A time-lapse image of the Air Force's Maui Space Surveillance Complex (MSSC) guide star laser system located on the summit of Haleakalā. MSSC is part of an 18-acre complex atop the mauna dubbed "Science City" that includes four military space surveillance telescopes and six academic telescopes - including the world's largest solar telescope. The presence of Science City within this sacred wao akua (godly realm) is an affront to kia'i who have struggled to protect Haleakalā - and its critical watershed and endangered species - for decades. And now the Air Force wants to build another seven telescopes on the mauna for "space tracking." - Photo: USAF Public Domain/Dr. Robert Q. Fugate

**National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)**

May 5, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.  
Ala Moana, O‘ahu

Sign waving on the corner of Atkinson Dr. and Ala Moana Blvd. to bring awareness to the disproportionate violence against Native women and mähū and call for systemic change. Wear red. IG @htchawaii.

**OHA Genealogy Workshop**

May 5, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Wailuku, Maui

A free workshop by genealogist Luci Meyer at OHA’s Maui office (1887 Wili Pa Loop, Ste. 1). Space is limited, rsvp required. Please contact 808-295-4396.

**Museum After Hours**

May 8, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
Kapālama, O‘ahu

Tribute to the late Kumu Hula Nālani Kanaka‘ole. Enjoy live performances and hear from a panel of creatives inspired by her ‘a‘ahu hula and modern apparel design. bishopmuseum.org

**The 10th Annual Kaua‘i Steel Guitar Festival**

May 10, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Līhue, Kaua‘i

Free concert featuring performances by Hawaiian steel guitar masters. Learn about and experience playing the Hawaiian steel guitar at the Kukui Grove Center. hawaiiansteelguitarfestival.com

**Kama‘āina Sunday**

May 10, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O‘ahu

Audio tours of ‘Iolani Palace, ‘ono food, lively entertainment, and local vendors. A free event. iolanipalace.org

**Project Maka‘ala: Fraud & Scams Can Happen to Anyone** OHA SPONSORED

May 15, 5:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
Key Project Pavilion | Kahalu‘u, O‘ahu

Fraud/financial scam awareness and education for kūpuna. Scams targeting kūpuna are on the rise. Learn to protect yourself. hawaiiancommunity.net

**Mālama Hulē‘ia Community Workday**

May 16, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Līhu‘e, Kaua‘i

Every 3rd Saturday volunteer to do conservation work at Alekoko Fishpond. malamahuleia.org

**Manini & Me Holoholo Festival!**

OHA SPONSORED  
May 16 - 17, Saturday 8:00 a.m. to Sunday 11:00 a.m. | Pōka‘i, O‘ahu

A shoreline fishing tournament to encourage traditional fishing practices, stewardship, and community. kapoel-awaia.org

**Make Music Jamms**

May 21, Noon - 1:00 p.m. | Honolulu, O‘ahu

A monthly concert hosted by the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame at the second-floor stage at Nā Lama Kukui. IG @nalamakukui

**May Day 2026** OHA SPONSORED

May 22, 9:00 a.m.  
Kamuela, Hawai‘i Island

The community is invited to Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School’s May Day celebration - Sense of Place, Sense of Belonging, at the Spencer Kalani Schutte District Park Gym.

**Pu‘uhonua Mākeke**

May 16, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Waimānalo, O‘ahu

Products, services, and businesses from Pu‘uhonua across Hawai‘i. Pu‘uhonua o Waimānalo in the Pavilion. FB/IG @puuhonuamakeke

**Waipā Community Workday**

May 23, 9:00 a.m. - Noon | Waipā, Kaua‘i

Check in at the old Waipā poi garage before 9:00 a.m. Bring shoes, water, gloves, hat, rain gear, a towel, a change of clothes, snacks and/or lunch. Lunch is provided if you RSVP in advance. waipa-foundation.org

**Hot Kūpuna Nights**

May 24, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O‘ahu

Bring your ‘ukulele to the second floor of Nā Lama Kukui and join in the kanikapila. Food available for purchase. IG @nalamakukui

**Farm-To-Table Course**

Application Deadline May 25, By noon  
Maui

A 6-week course (June 9 - July 19) focused on constructing a Farm-to-Table event, from start to finish. Students will explore each stage from agricultural production to guest experience. gofarmhawaii.org

**Wai‘anae Moku Made** OHA SPONSORED

May 29, 4:00 - 9:00 p.m. | Kapolei, O‘ahu

An event featuring Native Hawaiian-owned small businesses, cultural practitioners, and ‘ohana-centered engagement. Come shop, learn and connect at 91-5431 Kapolei Pkwy. thewedc.com

**Science & Sustainability Festival 2026**

May 30, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Kapālama, O‘ahu

Scientists, educators, practitioners, and community partners highlight their work to protect Hawai‘i’s unique biodiversity. Interactive activities, special presentations and exhibition highlights. bishopmuseum.org

**Learn Kōnane**

May 30, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O‘ahu

Free kōnane classes and on-going games at Nā Lama Kukui with Uncle John Kaohelaulii. IG @nalamakukui



**HAWAI‘I ISLAND**

**OHA Satellite Office Dates**

OHA’s Beneficiary Services travels to serve Native Hawaiian beneficiaries in various communities each month on Wednesdays from **8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

*Locations subject to change*

**Pāhoa**

**Wednesday, May 20**

Puna Kai Shopping Center  
15-2714 Pāhoa Village Rd.  
Pāhoa, HI 96778

**Miloli‘i**

**Wednesday, May 27**

Canoe Club Table  
89-1151 Miloli‘i Road  
Captain Cook, HI 96704

oha.org · 808-594-1835

**EXHIBITS**

**Hands Sticking Together - Hawai‘i Quilt Guild Show**

April 30 - May 10  
Mon - Sat, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. &  
Sun, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. | Iwilei, O‘ahu

A display of over 100 quilts and the Quilted Treasures gift shop. Saturday keiki activities, demonstrations and vendors. IG @hqqquiltshow

**Ke Kilo Lani - Robert Uluwehionāpuai Kawēkiuokalani Cazimero**

January 23 - May 15, Mon. - Sat.,  
12:30 - 4:30 p.m. | Kāne‘obe, O‘ahu

An exhibition honoring the life, legacy, and enduring impact of Robert Cazimero – renowned composer, kumu hula, and cultural ambassador. Programming and information at gallery.windward.hawaii.edu. ■



**Prince Albert Kamehameha**

May 20, 1858

Albert Edward Kauikeaouli Kaleiopapa a Kamehameha was born at Ihikapukalani a royal residence where the Hawai‘i State Archives is located today. Born to Alexander Liholiho Kamehameha IV and Emma Na‘ea Rooke, he was named after Kamehameha III and H.R.H. Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, the husband of H.M. Queen Victoria, his god-mother. He was adored by the people and was called Ka Haku O Hawai‘i (the Lord of Hawai‘i). At the age of 4, the crown prince and heir to the throne fell ill and passed away. The King ordered the construction of Mauna‘ala, the Royal Mausoleum in Nu‘uanu, to lay him to rest. Today, the Mausoleum is the resting place for members of the Kamehameha and Kalākaua dynasties.

**Summer L.H. Sylva**  
Interim Chief Administrator**K. Sean Kekina**  
Chief Operating Officer**Bill Brennan**  
Communications DirectorEDITOR  
Puanani Fernandez-AkamineGRAPHIC DESIGNER  
Kaleena PatchoSTAFF WRITERS  
Philamer Felicitas  
Kelli Meskin SoileauSTAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Nelson Gaspar  
Jason LeesCONTRIBUTORS  
Van Abbott  
Kalani Akana, Ph.D.J. Kimo Alama Keaulana  
Rose Angelo  
Megan Ulu-Lani BoyantonBobby Camara  
Donalyn Dela Cruz  
J. Kara DumaguinLisa Huynh Eller  
Bryan Esmeralda  
Devin Kamealoha ForrestHuliauapa'a  
Nāpualokelani Kamakele  
Hina KneubuhlKipukai Kualii  
Olin Lagon  
Lisa Kapono MasonJodi Leslie Matsuo, DrPH, RDN  
Kelsey Kukaua Medeiros  
Noelani MengelMelyssa Kawehi Moderow  
Hau'oli Lorenzo-Elarco  
Kenika Lorenzo-ElarcoKalei Nu'uhiwa, Ph.D.  
OHA Public Policy Team  
Andrew RosenMālia Sanders  
Kaeo Yuen

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## He Wahine, He Mana: Kuleana Across Generations

Aloha mai kākou,

**M**ay invites celebrating a strength we know well but do not always name – the quiet, enduring resilience carried through wāhine. In our mo'olelo, wāhine are not passive. Pele creates and transforms. Papa grounds and births. Hi'iaka journeys, heals, and restores. Hina, Haumea, and Kihawahine embody power that adapts, endures, and gives life even through disruption.

That inheritance moves through all of us.

This legislative session, like many before it, tests that resilience. Protections for 'āina and people remain unevenly enforced. Burial councils are without quorum. Efforts to ensure accountability in Public Land Trust (PLT) revenues – among the most significant mechanisms intended to uplift Native Hawaiians – continue to face inconsistent administration and sustained efforts to obstruct and destabilize this framework.

And still, our response is not retreat. It is steady, intentional persistence.

I witnessed something similar in East Maui, alongside the mahi'ai of Wailuanui, Ke'anae, and Honopou. Long-time commercial diverters stoked fears to stymie stream restoration that returned flows, long denied, would be taken in excess; that imbalances imposed across generations would, at last, be turned back upon them.

But the mahi'ai offered a different truth: why would those who endured imbalance choose to perpetuate it? Why not restore systems that sustain all?

That same clarity was echoed recently when I heard Kū Kahakalau speak for Pōhakuloa, not with hesitation, but with certainty. The return of that 'āina – all of it – is not a matter of if, but of when. Continued harm by the U.S. military is unacceptable; any compromise that allows it runs counter to her values.

One cannot help but wonder how different decisions might have been

had that 'ike guided the 1964 leases. That it now helps inform OHA's position in 2026 reflects a cultural inheritance that has never relented. Kuleana carried forward, generation to generation.

I see that same inheritance across our communities and within OHA: advocacy that remains steady despite shifting terrain; leaders who prepare, adapt, and stay anchored in purpose; and wāhine across our pae 'āina – mothers, daughters, aunties, kūpuna – carrying 'ike that guides decisions, often without recognition, always with impact.

Resilience for our lāhui is not endurance alone. It is clarity without hardness. It is the ability to adjust strategy without compromising values. It is optimism practiced with discipline paired with readiness for what must come next.

It also asks us to imagine better: A future where the PLT is managed with consistency and integrity. Where systems meant to serve actually function. Where restoration is responsibility, not debate. Where collective wellbeing reflects balance, not extraction.

This understanding is also personal. I carry the guidance of my own mama: whatever you choose to be, be your best, be of service, and be kind. That, too, is an inheritance – simple, steady, and enduring.

This work is not easy and progress is not always immediate. But movement, grounded and principled, is its own strength. Guided by 'ike and the mana of wāhine, over time what we build will endure, and what is pono will prevail. ■

Aloha nō

**Summer Lee Haunani Sylva**Ka Pouhana Kūikawā | Interim  
Chief Administrator

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# Apply Now to OHA's Mahi'ai Micro Fund Program

By Bill Brennan, OHA Director of Communications

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has launched the Mahi'ai Micro Fund Program, an initiative providing direct, flexible financial support to Native Hawaiian farmers across Hawai'i to help offset rising operational costs and strengthen agricultural enterprises.

The program offers two tiers of funding to meet varying needs across the state's farming community. Farmers impacted by the recent Kona Low weather events may be eligible for awards of up to \$5,000, while other eligible farmers may receive awards of up to \$3,000 to support ongoing operational costs.

This approach ensures that immediate recovery needs are addressed, while continuing to support the broader stability and sustainability of Native Hawaiian farming operations statewide.

"Supporting our mahi'ai is essential to the health of our lāhui and the future of Hawai'i," said Kaiali'i Kahele, OHA Board of Trustees chairperson. "This fund is an investment in our people and our āina – ensuring that Native Ha-

waiian farmers have the resources they need to thrive while perpetuating the cultural practices that sustain us."

OHA is collaborating with Hawaiian Council to support implementation of the program and administration of funds.

To be considered, applicants must complete the following:

- Confirm Native Hawaiian status through the Hawaiian Registry Program (HRP): [oha.org/hawaiian-registry](http://oha.org/hawaiian-registry)
- To apply, complete the Mahi'ai Micro Fund Inquiry Form at: [tinyurl.com/MahiaiMicrofundInquiry](http://tinyurl.com/MahiaiMicrofundInquiry)

Applicants who complete these steps will be referred to the Hawaiian Council for funding consideration.

Application Window:

**May 1–15, 2026**

Award Notifications:

**By June 15, 2026**

Selected awardees will be contacted to submit required documentation prior to receiving funds. For more information or assistance, contact: [economicresilience@oha.org](mailto:economicresilience@oha.org). ■

**Mahi'ai  
MICRO FUND**

Native Hawaiian farmers can receive up to \$5,000 if impacted by the recent Kona low storms; up to \$3,000 for ongoing operational support.

Higher funding is prioritized for those directly affected by the storms.

Fill out the Mahi'ai Micro Fund Inquiry Form

**Get Started Today!**

ADMINISTERED BY **HAWAIIAN COUNCIL**

# Affordable Housing Advocacy Ongoing at the Legislature

By OHA's Public Policy Team

Access to stable, affordable long-term housing, with particular emphasis on access to Hawaiian Home Lands, has remained a priority policy concern for OHA beneficiaries for many years. Lack of access to affordable housing within our community is evidenced by, among other social indicators, the increasing rate of out-migration by longtime residents and the growing number of houseless 'ohana.

To address the housing crisis, OHA's 2026 legislative package included a bill to cap annual rent increases at 3% (SB2539/HB2105). Similar tenant protections have been enacted in other states, especially to prevent price gouging following natural disasters such as wildfires.

Unfortunately, this bill did not receive a hearing in either the House or Senate even though rent on Moku o Keawe, Maui, and Kaua'i increased 54%, 52%, and 23%, respectively, between 2019 and 2024.

OHA was repeatedly told by legislators that tenant protections are not feasible because developers won't build new housing if profits are constrained.

OHA has become one of the few voices advocating for smarter regulations amid a growing chorus that posits "building more" as the only solution to Hawai'i's housing crisis. But units do not naturally 'trickle down' when new luxury developments are built. Rather, there is endless elasticity for mostly out-of-state investors to buy up multiple units for the sole purpose of profit, rather than as a primary or secondary residence.

This lived experience reinforces that without workforce housing mandates and affordability guardrails, housing and rent prices will continue to outpace local incomes and purchasing power.

Although OHA's package bills died, OHA advocated for the following housing affordability measures that are advancing to conference:

## SB3048 SD1 HD1

This proposal from the SPEED Task Force aims to improve agency coordination and data sharing to expedite housing construction for those who need it most

without compromising environmental and cultural protections. In contrast, broad exemptions from regulatory requirements risk undermining protections required by the state constitution – including those for iwi kūpuna – without meaningful benefit to the public.

## HB1741 HD2 SD1

OHA, joined by other advocacy groups like Locals In My Backyard (LIMBY), is asking the legislature to reconsider this measure, which removes or creates hurdles for the counties to mandate affordable housing. County zoning authority is an important regulatory tool for producing affordable housing for local residents, enabling flexibility to meet local demand, and providing space for innovation. Restricting county authority in this space will slow down new pilot programs and workforce housing solutions.

## SB2405 SD1 HD2

OHA supported, and was added as a member to, the proposed Agricultural Workforce Housing Working Group. This working group will help to examine the need for agricultural workforce housing in each of the counties, as well as necessary guardrails to ensure loopholes aren't exploited for "gentlemen farms" and other uses that do not support food production.

Preservation of agricultural lands for agricultural uses is not only critical for food sovereignty but also for open spaces, rural lifestyles, and watershed management.

Ultimately, new construction is not directly linked to the supply of housing accessible to the state's residents. Rather, strong housing policies are necessary to ensure we deliver homes across a range of incomes, help those with the greatest need, and make sure we plan and build in appropriate areas where we have wai and infrastructure support, and that we don't compromise on cultural and environmental protections to get there.

The goal is not just to build more housing; it is to ensure that the housing we build meets local needs. ■

*The Office of Hawaiian Affairs Public Policy Team includes Leinā'ala Ley, Deja Ostrowski, Imiloa Borland, Sharde Freitas, Michele McCoy, Kamaile Puluole-Mitchell, and McKenna Woodward.*

# Maunakea, Pōhakuloa, and the Word They Keep Using

By Olin Lagon

**W**hen the Thirty Meter Telescope was proposed for Maunakea, I pushed back on one assumption that kept coming up. That the mauna was “irreplaceable.”

I am not an astrophysicist, so I asked Dr. John Mather who won the Nobel Prize in Physics and led science on the James Webb Space Telescope for nearly three decades. He explained that ground-based and space-based telescopes do complementary work, and that Webb data combined with other Earth-based observatories can offset the infrared advantage Maunakea holds over sites like La Palma.

Moving TMT was not a retreat from science. It was a viable path forward.

The military is making a similar argument about the Pōhakuloa Training Area. So, is Pōhakuloa really “irreplaceable?”

The military is already training on comparable terrain every day. Fort Bliss and McGregor Range in Texas and New Mexico together cover 1.12 million acres at elevations that overlap with Pōhakuloa’s, beneath one of the largest restricted airspace corridors on the continent.

Peer-reviewed research documents that Idaho’s east-

ern Snake River Plain, where the Army trains, shares Hawai‘i’s volcanic geology, including pāhoehoe, ‘a‘ā, cinder cones, and lava tubes. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms in California includes ancient lava flows geologically similar to our own.

The alternatives are not just geographic. The Army has invested billions in its Synthetic Training Environment, which it describes as allowing more training repetitions than live fire at lower cost and with improved safety, and as essential for replicating complex, large-scale environments.

Demanding better alternatives to Pōhakuloa is not anti-military. It is pro-innovation.

Then there is the question of what this ‘āina is worth. The U.K. pays the Republic of Mauritius roughly \$20,000 per acre each year for Diego Garcia. The U.S. pays the Republic of the Marshall Islands around \$13,600 per acre on Kwajalein.

These agreements tell us what fair market value looks like when countries negotiate honestly. Apply either rate to Pōhakuloa’s 23,000 leased acres and the number lands between \$313 million and \$460 million a year.

So, what if the Army moved training to Twentynine Palms tomorrow? Many would call that a win.

But I know it would be devastating for the Twenty-

Nine Palms Band, the Chemehuevi, and the other peoples who hold that desert sacred, who know their Oasis of Mara the way we know our wahi pana. They have already had their places taken, fenced off, and bombed. We know what that feels like.

Trading one people’s wounds for another’s is not justice.

So maybe the real question is not about irreplaceability at all, but why 27 million acres of military-controlled land is still not enough? The Army’s own reporting shows that 29% of its infrastructure capacity exceeds its needs. That’s their number, not mine.

One and a half cents per year for 23,000 acres at Pōhakuloa. Somewhere in that number is everything you need to know about how this ‘āina has been valued, and by whom.

Pōhakuloa is irreplaceable. Not as training ground. As ‘āina. ■

*Olin Kealoha Lagon is a technology entrepreneur and lo‘i kalo farmer. A military and Peace Corps veteran, he has deep roots in Kānaka-serving organizations. He is a member of OHA’s Technical Advisory Group, which provides guidance to the Board of Trustees on matters related to the military in Hawai‘i.*



## ‘O ke kahua ma mua, ma hope ke kūkulu

Kumu create the strong kahua upon which haumāna grow and discover their purpose. Rooted in ‘ike kūpuna and guided by kuleana, they shape the ‘ōiwi leaders who will carry our lāhui forward.

Mahalo piha e nā kumu!



Ke Kula ‘o Kamehameha

# Kūlana Kahu'āina

## A living ethical code of conduct for wahi kūpuna stewardship

Submitted by Huliauapa'a

**E**a encapsulates the multifaceted meanings of life, breath, and political sovereignty, symbolizing a rising; the collective effort of the community to safeguard the 'āina that sustains them physically and spiritually.

These interpretations share that ea is an active state of existence. Like breathing, ea cannot simply be acquired or possessed; it requires daily action across generations. What does ea represent today? Is it the Waiāluā community uniting to protect and care for one another during a natural disaster? Or is it the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ōhana's commitment to aloha 'āina – to la'a, ma'a pa'a, and remain resolute against military, political, and environmental pressures?

Ea is founded upon the genealogical experiences of individuals on the land and the relationships cultivated through the processes of remembrance and stewardship of 'āina and community. Ea traces back to the very origin of the 'āina itself and it encompasses not only the physical aspects of 'āina but also our ancestral places, resources, and knowledge systems – our wahi kūpuna.

For decades, Kānaka 'Ōiwi have endeavored to maintain the ea of our mo'olelo, iwi kūpuna, wahi kūpuna, and koehana (material culture) against threats like colonization, over-tourism, military expansion, land development, and mismanagement on our islands.

As we strive to protect and steward these wahi kūpuna, we are reminded that part of our ea involves decolonizing these processes and asserting ourselves as Kānaka 'Ōiwi in spaces that were originally meant to exclude us. While we celebrate our resistance to these pressures, it is also a fitting time to actively develop our own frameworks that deepen our understanding and approaches in a manner that is undeniably and unconditionally Kānaka 'Ōiwi.

For the Kali'uokapa'akai Collective, it is the Kūlana Kahu'āina, a core ethical framework guiding how we care for Hawai'i's wahi kūpuna, that uplifts our ea. This



February 2026 Kali'uokapa'akai Collective Kūlana Kahu'āina Report and Film launch. - Photos: Huliauapa'a

living document reflects community values by outlining ethics, standards, and principles for Wahi Kūpuna Stewardship and offers direction toward deeper engagement with this practice.

It conveys these responsibilities through kūlana (principles) of our living values: each kūlana outlines ethical responsibilities and best practices for engaging with 'Ōiwi communities, 'āina, and wahi kūpuna. Together, they establish shared expectations and standards that foster trust, accountability, and integrity in this interdisciplinary field. This living document is the result of a multi-year, collaborative effort shaped by generations of wahi kūpuna stewards who remain deeply rooted in their 'āina and communities.

The Kūlana Kahu'āina serves anyone engaged in, or seeking to engage in, wahi kūpuna stewardship. It establishes clarity around shared values and how to act upon them, supporting a broader shift toward valuing, prioritizing, and normalizing stewardship grounded in 'Ōiwi ethics.

The Kūlana Kahu'āina is the sister document to the Kali'uokapa'akai Collective Report. Whereas the report outlined the Kali'uokapa'akai Collective's priority action items, the Kūlana Kahu'āina represents the first step in operationalizing those priorities. It acts as a vessel to help wahi kūpuna stewards stay aligned with our shared goals.

Providing an 'Ōiwi approach to ethics in wahi kūpuna stewardship, the Kūlana Kahu'āina articulates and elevates the living values that our community of practice commits to upholding as part of caring for Hawai'i's iwi kūpuna, wahi kūpuna, and 'ike kūpuna. The Kali'uokapa'akai Collective's living values are composed of eight kūlana that reflect practical guidelines and best practices for wahi kūpuna stewards across the pae 'āina. These values are interconnected, and integrate and support one another in practice.

These ethics define our kuleana as wahi kūpuna stewards. What we consider fair, just, and right, and the living Hawaiian values we seek to uphold, perpetuate, and normalize. Our ethics are foundational to our vision of empowered communities restoring, reinvigorating, and stewarding Hawai'i wahi kūpuna through ea.

Accompanying this report, the *Kūlana Kahu'āina* film features members of the Kali'uokapa'akai Collective 'Aha Kuapapa (steering committee), Papa Kāheka (kūpuna council), and stewards from across the pae 'āina. The film highlights the eight values in action, offering insight into the unique ways wahi kūpuna stewards uphold these standards in their daily practice.

Considerable efforts are still required to fully reform Hawai'i's historic preservation and resource management systems. However, these challenges are not unprecedented. Just as ea was used as a guiding principle and practice by our kūpuna to confront the challenges of their time, they persisted and remained steadfast across generations. Likewise, ea is applicable to us in addressing specific challenges and reforming the broken systems of today.

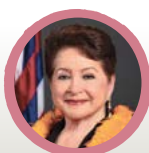
Wahi kūpuna stewardship embodies a shared responsibility across communities, sectors, and practices. We all play an integral role in healing our systems. ■

*The "Kūlana Kahu'āina" film is available online at [youtube.com/@thekaliuokapaakaicollective](https://youtube.com/@thekaliuokapaakaicollective). If you wish to support the Kūlana Kahu'āina and our movement toward ethical stewardship of wahi kūpuna, please affirm your support by completing an endorsement form: [bit.ly/EndorseKKR](https://bit.ly/EndorseKKR).*



**JOIN US for OUR  
UPCOMING MAUI  
COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Maui



**CARMEN "HULU"  
LINDSEY**  
Trustee for Maui

COMMUNITY MEETING

**Wednesday, May 6, 2026  
6:00 p.m.**

*Both meetings will be held at:* **UH Maui College, Pā'ina Building**  
310 W. Ka'ahumanu Ave., Kahului, HI 96732

OHA BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

**Thursday, May 7, 2026  
9:00 a.m.**

Meetings will be live streamed on

# The Kuleana to Maintain Kū'īlioloa Heiau

By Kelsey Kukaua Medeiros, *Aloha State Daily*

It was a breezy, blue-skied Thursday morning after a storm when we visited Kū'īlioloa Heiau.

The Hawaiian temple dates to the 11th or 12th century, according to a sculpture from the City and County of Honolulu, which manages the site situated on the Kāne'īlio Point near Pōka'i Bay in Wai'anae.

The ancient name for this place was Nene'ū before it became Kū'īlioloa, translated to "the long dog form of Kū," or the God of War as a dog. Legend says a navigator from Tahiti, Lonokaeho, constructed it as a training center and lighthouse for navigation. It is the only heiau in the Islands that is bordered on three sides by the ocean.

Today, The Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Moku O Kapuāiwa Chapter, helps mālama the land by mowing the grass, restoring rock walls, pulling weeds, planting trees and more, at least twice a month, so that the local community can still use and enjoy it.

"It's not a burial heiau, but a navigation point. Not many people know that," Rocky Nae'ole, member of the Order, said. "It's part of our kuleana. This is for us to maintain. We don't receive income from anybody. It's all volunteer. We're just here to do the work."

Nae'ole was born in Honolulu and moved to the West Side at age 12. He's fully retired, yet committed to six to eight community organizations, he said.

"Our Order has 10 mokus. Kapuāiwa covers the Wai'anae Coast to the North Shore to 'Ewa," he explained, adding that its membership is in the hundreds, while about 30 to 40 individuals remain currently active.

The purpose of the Order is "to preserve and perpetuate the ancient customs of Hawai'i" and uplift the Hawaiian people, its website states.

He noted that the group collectively decides what they want to do in the community each year; this project has remained a priority for 12 or more years.

"You can see the stars so clear out here," he said, noting that University of Hawai'i at Mānoa students, non-profits, visitors and community members have come out before to stargaze. The Order plans to host a navigation event open to the public later this year.



Member of The Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Moku O Kapuāiwa Chapter, Abraham Kalani Ka'io, presents a map showcasing the 13 public-access heiau along the Leeward Coast. - Photos: Aloha State Daily



Fellow member of The Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Rocky Nae'ole speaks about the importance of Kū'īlioloa Heiau and its navigational purpose.

Nae'ole is looking forward to the community events lined up this year and hopes to work with the county on signage for additional mo'olelo of Kū'īlioloa Heiau.

Another member of the Order, Abraham Kalani Ka'io, shared what the ancient site means to him.

"This heiau is a gathering of all of the Pacific Triangle. Every island in the triangle, you can get there from here. This is a tie to all of our brothers and sisters in the triangle, and I try to explain that to every race that comes here. In one way or another, your family [has] been here."

He presented a map, showcasing the 13 public-access heiaus along the Leeward Coast. Others sit on military-owned land, he added.

Ka'io, who was born in Germany and raised on O'ahu, said that when they first started cleaning the heiau years ago, "it was in bad shape. The place was overrun by homeless and nobody took care of it."

Now, he says some have returned to lend a hand on cleanup days, which typically run on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

Not to mention, several organizations have aided in caring for the marine life, consisting of at least three species of birds, as well as Hawaiian monk seals.

His advice to young people is to learn their culture instead of playing games, he said with a laugh. "Your knowledge of culture is knowing who you are."

While standing at the point of Kū'īlioloa Heiau, Nae'ole asked if there was anything I needed to let go of.

I replied with a nod.

He said to face the ocean and close my eyes, then began to pray in ʻōlelo Hawai'i.

I breathed in and out twice as instructed. The wind grazed my cheek and tossed my hair.

"You can see the ocean from three sides and take it all in, feel how quiet it is," he said. "If I'm stressed out - which I don't try to stress myself out, sometimes you can't help it - this is where I come." ■

*Kelsey Kukaua Medeiros covers community news as senior editor of "Aloha State Daily." A Native Hawaiian with roots in Maui, she moved to O'ahu from Los Angeles in 2019.*

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*Kaua'i*



**DAN AHUNA**  
Trustee for Kaua'i  
& Ni'ihau

COMMUNITY MEETING

**Thursday, May 14, 2026  
6:00 p.m.**

*Both meetings will be held at:* **Waimea Neighborhood Center**  
455 Makeke Road, Waimea, HI 96796

OHA BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

**Friday, May 15, 2026  
9:00 a.m.**

Meetings will be live streamed on



# A Week of Celebration at the 2026 Merrie Monarch Festival

The town of Hilo is still aglow in the aftermath of the annual Merrie Monarch Festival held the week of April 5. From outstanding hula performances to craft fairs and workshops to the popular parade, it was a joyful celebration of Hawaiian culture.

This year's overall winner of the competition was O'ahu's Hālau Hi'iakaināmakalehua, under the direction of Kumu Hula Robert Keano Ka'upu IV. The hālau also took first place overall in the kāne division. Hālau Mōhala 'Ilima, under the direction of Kumu Hula Māpuana de Silva, took first place overall in the wāhine division.

On April 9, Faith Kealohapau'ole Paredes was crowned Miss Aloha Hula. Paredes, from Hālau Kekuaokalā'au'ala'iliahi, under nā Kumu Hula Haunani and 'Iliahi Paredes, also earned the prestigious 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Award for her command and depth in language and performance. The 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Award is conferred by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) and was presented to Paredes by Trustee Hulu Lindsey.

Throughout the week, OHA engaged with the community at the Civic Auditorium, hosted workshops at its Hilo office, and joined in the Merrie Monarch Royal Parade, distributing Hae Hawai'i to parade watchers in celebration of hula, Hawaiian culture, and the heritage of Hilo.

*Photos on pages 8-9: Philamer Felicitas and Jason Lees*



KĀNE OVERALL WINNER

Hālau Hi'iakaināmakalehua  
Kumu Robert Keano Ka'upu IV



WAHINE OVERALL WINNER

Hālau Mōhala 'Ilima  
Kumu Māpuana de Silva



## OHA Delegation Travels to D.C.



Office of Hawaiian Affairs Chair Kaiuli'i Kahele led a delegation to Washington, D.C., the week of April 20 to engage with congressional leaders and Department of Defense officials on critical issues impacting Native Hawaiians, including military-leased lands in Hawai'i and proposed federal funding cuts to Native Hawaiian programs. The delegation met with Hawai'i's congressional delegation, bipartisan lawmakers on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, and other senior federal leaders. The delegation included (l-r): Associate General Counsel Rozelle Agag, Trustee Keoni Souza, Interim Chief Administrator Summer Sylva, Kahele, and Trustee Carmen "Hulu" Lindsey.

- Courtesy Photo

# Trading Miami for Hilo

By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

The kūpuna have called Melissa “Missy” Momi-Lani Boyanton, 27, to the ‘āina.

Hawai‘i isn’t home in the same sense as her drizzly birthplace, Renton, Washington, or the swampy suburbs of New Orleans, Louisiana, where she grew up. But it is her motherland – the place where her grandmother waded in East Maui lo‘i and where generations thrived before her.

This July, Boyanton will follow in their footsteps, making the leap from Miami, Florida, to Hilo. She’s accepted a school psychology internship at the Ka‘ū-Kea‘au-Pāhoa Complex Area, where she aspires to uplift Kānaka Maoli students among others.

“The American education system was imposed upon our people,” Boyanton said. “The systems need to change to better respect and integrate our values, especially on the islands.”

Her next steps are a childhood wish coming true.

Boyanton was raised in a traditional nuclear family of four. She glowingly referred to her father, Carl Boyanton, as “the epitome of a Southern man.” Her mother, Heidi Ululani Goodall Boyanton, is primarily of Kānaka and white descent, although her great-grandfather emigrated from China to work in Hawai‘i.

Boyanton, the youngest of two, spent her earliest years toddling behind her older sister. She was only a keiki when her ‘ohana left Renton for a yearlong stint in Diamondhead, Mississippi, before settling down in Slidell, Louisiana.

She felt grateful for the insulation of her close-knit neighborhood where kids romped outside, set up lemonade stands, and chased after the ice cream truck. Boyanton said it was “just joy.”

But “as much as I loved growing up in the South, there obviously was not a big Hawaiian community,” Boyanton said. “I was always kind of chasing my Hawaiian identity.”

Born with blonde hair like her father, she didn’t feel like she looked Kanaka. Though her tresses darkened over time, the sentiment stuck. Still, she can recall pidgin words slipped into conversations at home. Boyanton leaned on her inoa Hawai‘i for grounding.

Her dad, who owned a produce company, worked grueling hours almost every day. Her mom balanced an accounting job at the family business with parenting demands, packing lunches and dropping the girls off at extracurriculars.

Though Boyanton painted herself as an anxious and shy child, she found outlets for expression – including a budding sense of humor. She swam competitively from a young age, and, for 15 years, she chased after balls on soc-



Melissa Momi-Lani Boyanton - Courtesy Photo

cer fields. Boyanton learned how to play piano and tried her hand at the violin.

Life took a turn when the middle schooler explored the attic of her home, rummaging through boxes. Boyanton found a dusty psychology textbook. Her mom had hoped to be a psychologist, and she’d stowed the book away.

Boyanton inherited that dream.

She described her four years at Slidell’s Pope John Paul II Catholic High School as “formative.” Boyanton looked forward to her literature and art classes, painting in her bedroom late into the night.

After graduating in 2016, she started college at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge before transferring to the Lone Star State’s Houston Community College. But she really hit her stride

when she landed at Northwestern State University of Louisiana in Natchitoches.

“It was everything I wanted it to be,” Boyanton said.

The small-town undergraduate experience served as the launchpad for her psychology career. In the pursuit of a bachelor’s degree in psychology and addiction studies, she seized opportunities in her field. Boyanton served as an administrative and research assistant at her school’s counseling center, and she drove to nearby Winnfield, Louisiana, to work with children with disabilities as a registered behavioral health technician.

She also embraced leadership roles, presiding over both the psychology club and the local Psi Chi International Honor Society.

After earning her degree in 2020, Boyanton debated her next steps. She decided to move in with her sister in Washington, D.C., in 2021 and enjoyed a gap year.

“When I think about my favorite time in life, it was my time spent in D.C.,” Boyanton said.

It was work and play: She took on roles as a therapy aide at a clinic and a test development assistant at Cambium Assessment, along with an internship as a grant researcher and writer at Empowerment through Integration, a global nonprofit.

Boyanton also touched Hawaiian soil for the first time that year when she traveled to Kaua‘i. “You can just feel the mana,” she said.

Miami, Florida, beckoned in 2022 when she decided to pursue her master’s degree in school psychology.

While learning at Barry University, she worked as a psychometric research associate at Cambium Assessment and a learning specialist under a school psychologist. A work trip on O‘ahu helped Boyanton begin to bridge the gap between her Hawaiian identity and her career ambitions.

After graduating in 2024, Boyanton went on to enroll at Florida International University for her specialist’s degree in school psychology, which she will complete in May 2027.

Like kalo, Boyanton has unfurled her lau.

She worked as an adjunct instructor and teaching assistant in psychology courses. She published several academic papers, including one with a Kanaka school psychologist on supporting Native Hawaiian adolescents. She served as president of her university’s school psychology student association. Boyanton presented at conferences and took on roles within the National Association of School Psychologists, representing the Pacific Islander faction.

As she prepares for her move from Miami to Hilo, Boyanton said, “I am more rooted now in my Hawaiian identity than ever. Less than 1% of school psychologists identify as Native Hawaiian, so I’m happy to be a part of that.” ■

*Author’s note: Melissa Momi-Lani Boyanton is the sister of Ka Wai Ola writer Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton.*

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# ALOHA 'ĀINA LEADER AWARDS

## CLASS OF 2026

The Aloha 'Āina Leader Awards, now in its 9th year, honor the future of our lāhui by recognizing graduating seniors for their commitment to aloha 'āina. These emerging leaders have accepted the kuleana to serve and uplift their communities. The awards affirm the importance of our cultural values in today's society and recognize the many kumu and mākuā who have supported these haumāna along the way. Kanaeokana also acknowledges the generous support of Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for making these awards possible.



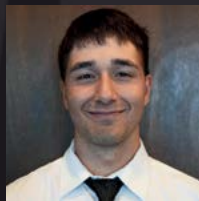
Angeline K. Nahoi  
Nanahuli, O'ahu  
Hakipu'u Academy



Nykee Kekupukoa Naeole-Starkey  
Puu Hanohi, Kaunakakai, Molokai  
O Hina I Ka Malama



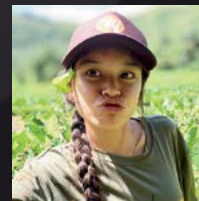
Hāehu Masau Lee  
Honolouani, Keolu, Waialae  
Ka 'Umeke Kāeo



Hau'olikeola Walker  
Hau'ohala, Kō'olauloa, O'ahu  
Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha Kapilama



Hi'ilei Kealahiwahiwa  
Pulelehu Hamburg  
Puna, Kauai  
Kawaikini NCPCS



Hōkūāo Makali'i Aki  
Waialua, Maui  
Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Kekaulike



Kyndan Kulana Nagao  
Kona Moku, Kekaha, Kauai  
Ke Kula Niuhau O Kekaha



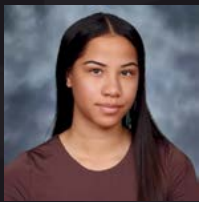
Isabella Maluaka Wisley-Botelho  
Paunau, Lahaina, Maui  
Kula Kaiapuni 'o Lahainaluna



Ikualong Jackson  
Kalihi, O'ahu  
Hālan Kū Māna



Kahuakua Kahalioumi-Mersberg  
Waimano, O'ahu  
Saint Louis School



Jasmine Kaleonahahe Lopez  
Anahola, Kō'olauloa, Kauai  
Kanuikaponi PCS



Kala'ikūiwa Walk  
Keolanui Aiona  
Hilo, Hawaii  
Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīkalanī 'Ōpu'u



Kala'ikūiwa Walk  
Kahala'u, Kō'olauloa, O'ahu  
Ke Kula 'o Pū'ohala



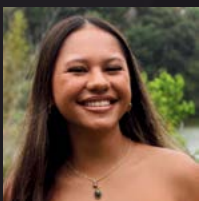
Na'auao Kani'āhe Nalimu  
Puna, Hawaii  
Ke Ana Lā'ahana Public Charter School



Kalikopuaena Kamaka  
Hālualoa, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii  
Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunikaimalino



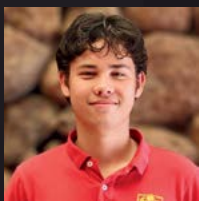
Kanoah Kekaimalu Jury  
Wai'anae, O'ahu  
Kamaile Academy PCS



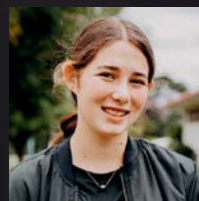
Kaleonaha  
Kala'ikealohakaipoileimakanoee'uanu  
Paleka  
Wai'anae, O'ahu  
Ke Kula Kaiapuni 'o Anuenue



Kauha'anui Jiyoji  
Kin Sing Domingo  
Kā'ānua, Kō'olauloa, O'ahu  
Ke Kula 'o Samuel M. Kamakau, LPCS



Kawelo Pearson Sarsona  
Pū'ukapu, Waimea, Hawaii  
Kamu o ka 'Āina



Koali Kekēhaumililehuaoeahiahia  
Tetsuko Pu'uohau  
Puna, Hawaii  
Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha Hawaii



Chloe Māpuana Hokoana  
Waikapu, Maui  
Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha Maui



Pekelo Kawaipuikawahaokahaku Graycohea  
Lā'ie, Kō'olauloa, O'ahu  
Kula Kaiapuni Hawaii 'o Kahuku Academy



'O ke aloha 'āina, 'o ia ka 'ume mākēneki  
i loko o ka pu'uwai o ka Lāhui.

—Joseph Nāwahī



# Stopping Resort Development at Historic Wailuanui

By Donalyn Dela Cruz

The drive on Kūhio Highway between Līhu‘e and Kapa‘a often slows to a crawl through Wailua, especially in the afternoon when pau hana hits. Congestion peaks between 4:30 and 6:00 p.m., with traffic backing up near the Wailua River Bridge as it moves through the Wailua-Kapa‘a corridor.

In those moments, sitting in pau hana traffic offers a pause to reflect on the magnitude of that place.

“What I think is important is Wailuanuiaho‘āno in its entirety,” said Mason Chock, who is from Wailua and serves on the Board of Directors for the nonprofit I Ola Wailuanui. “It’s been my own experience growing up here in terms of how disconnected we are from how important Wailua is.”

One of Kaua‘i’s most sacred and historically significant landscapes, Wailua is home to a complex of seven heiau and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962. The area is historically known as Wailuanuiaho‘āno and served as the principal residence of the island’s ali‘i. The Wailua River, a rare 20-mile navigable waterway, further shapes its cultural and physical landscape.

“I mean, Wailua is a place where if you throw a rock, get major, major kinds of things right there,” added Chock. “What I think is most prominent are the 34 iwi found there.”

Wailua is also famously known for what was built on the Mahunapu‘uone burial grounds.

Many are familiar with the Wailua Kai area, where the iconic Coco Palms Resort opened in 1953 and became a popular and iconic tourism destination, particularly for its featured role in the 1961 Elvis Presley film *Blue Hawaii*. By the 1970s the 24-room resort had expanded to over 400 rooms.

In 1973, during construction of the resort’s north wing, 34 sets of iwi were unearthed. The remains were later reinterred and marked on the property.

Additional accounts, including a 2004 interview cited in an environmental impact statement, suggest that as many as 81 iwi kūpuna were exhumed during earlier phases of the resort’s original construction, underscoring the site’s location within the extensive Mahunapu‘uone burial grounds.

After being severely damaged from the force of Hurricane ‘Iniki in 1992, Coco Palms shut down and has sat in disarray for three decades.

“That property was so important to who we were back in the day,” said Sue Kanoho, the recently retired long-time Kaua‘i Visitors Bureau Executive Director. “To this day, we still have people ask about Coco Palms. That’s how much of an impact it’s had on people.”

That kind of legacy is one that developers continue to pursue. Despite several attempts to restore it to its former glory, none have succeeded. Still, visions of its Hollywood heyday continue.

Utah-based Reef Capital Partners took ownership of Coco Palms in 2022. It partnered with IHG Hotels &



I Ola Wailuanui's board includes (l-r): Mason Chock, Micah Bukoski, Nikki Cristobal, Makana Reilly, Tricia Terao-Murphy and Pua Rossi-Fukino. - Courtesy Photos

Resorts which, in June 2024, stated in a news release: “Following a historically sensitive restoration of the iconic property, Coco Palms, A Kimpton Resort, will once again become an inspiring tropical retreat for travelers and the Kaua‘i community to explore the expansive experiences the destination has to offer. The transformed resort is anticipated to open in 2026.”

The next month, the state Intermediate Court of Appeals ruled a 2020 foreclosure deal involving a previous developer was invalid because it was filed by the loan servicer, not the lender.

Since the late 1990s, a growing community effort led by lineal descendants and long-time residents has focused on restoring the cultural significance of the Wailuanuiaho‘āna district and reshaping the future of the Coco Palms property, including efforts to acquire and steward the area. About three years ago those efforts were formalized into the nonprofit I Ola Wailuanui.

“It’s a multiple organization kind of approach, but more importantly, a vision that’s led by the community. And I am talking about the community that has ties to that particular place,” said Chock. “Part of it is how we manage our tourist experience to learn about these important places.”

The Kaua‘i Destination Management Action Plan, which aims to guide tourism in a way that prioritizes community values and resource protection, also reflects community sentiment against hotel development in that area.

“From the community’s standpoint, we’re hearing that there is strong support for a community cultural facility rather than a hotel,” said Kanoho, who added that many are also concerned about traffic congestion.

“That particular area has become an important access point for the North Shore to the airport and the hospital. Any development in that area needs very close scrutiny so as not to become a bottleneck for our residents and



Aerial photo of Wailuanui taken about 100 years ago.

visitors.”

Reef Capital Partners Chief Financial Officer Jon Day, who could not be reached for this story, addressed those concerns last year telling KHON2, “We expect very few guests to bring cars, we are going to charge a pretty high rate for any guest who wants to park a car on sight ... The real traffic problem is at rush hour. Our hotel shifts will not coincide with rush hour; our guests don’t come and go at rush hour.”

Reef Capital Partners plans to invest \$400 million for the Coco Palms Resort redevelopment which includes rebuilding a 350-room hotel, three swimming pools, a spa, and a cultural center.

County permitting records indicate that the project is not moving forward in any visible or active construction phase, but it has not been terminated. The project remains in a holding pattern, with past approvals in place but no clear recent momentum.

Late last month, I Ola Wailuanui sent a letter to the county requesting revocation of the construction permits, based on the premise of ongoing lawsuits tied to the project.

“My connection to this is to make sure that this waiho‘na (depository) of information, knowledge and cultural presence is honored,” Chock said. ■

# Waipā: From Resistance to Regeneration

By Philamer Felicitas

At the base of a lush valley in northern Kauaʻi, where rain clouds gather and rivers wind their way to the sea, is the ahupuaʻa of Waipā. It is more than a place. It is a living system, a reminder of what Hawaiʻi once was and what it can still become.

Long before visitors arrived with cameras and itineraries, this ahupuaʻa fed a thriving population through extensive loʻi systems nourished by ʻauwai, and ʻohana lived in deep relationship with the ʻāina that sustained them. Waipā was abundant, not in excess, but in balance.

Over time, that balance was broken. From sandalwood extraction to rice farming, the valley changed, and by the 20th century, development threatened this once food-producing land. Plans were in motion to transform Waipā into a resort landscape, reshaped for visitors rather than rooted in community. But Waipā did not disappear, even as the community that once lived in deep relationship with it began to be displaced.

In 1982, led by LaFrance Kapaka Arboleda, ʻohana from Kauaʻi's north shore came together to oppose that future. They envisioned something different. A living learning center where Hawaiian culture, food systems, and ways of life could continue.

Alongside Kapaka Arboleda, community members including Cathy Kalehua Ham Young, Akita Harada, Harry Hoe, George Kaona, Samson Mahuiki Sr., Eddie Puʻulei, William Puʻulei, Dukie Puʻulei, Charlie Spencer, and David K. Sproat helped carry that vision forward. Others, including Gladys Brandt, Patrick Kelekoma Sr., Eugene Lum, Atwood Makaanani, and Francis X. Warther, were instrumental in protecting Waipā from development and helping establish the Hawaiian Farmers of Hanalei.

They obtained the lease for Waipā in 1986 from Kamehameha Schools and today Waipā is one of the few ahupuaʻa in Hawaiʻi that remains whole and under a single steward.

The Waipā Foundation, established in 1994, assumed the master lease and nearly all operations by 2005. It now cares for more than 1,600 acres, managing the valley as a living system rooted in stewardship, cultural resiliency, and agriculture.

For Waipā Foundation Executive Director Stacy Sproat, the work is deeply personal. “We’ve always been entrepreneurial,” Sproat said. “But it’s always been about how do we sustain this work and still stay true to who we are.” She reflects on her life’s work as a blessing, being able to restore and sustain her community while continuing the practices she grew up with.

Over decades, she worked alongside kūpuna leaders to help build Waipā as a place where Hawaiian community could thrive. Though those kūpuna are now passed, their work and knowledge live on across the ʻāina. There are more ʻoʻopu swimming in the stream, less damage



Waipā's work has expanded beyond growing food. In an effort to raise future farmers and community advocates, the valley serves as an outdoor classroom, providing educational programs and hands-on experiences for schools, families and community members.

- Courtesy Photos



View of a portion of the 1,600-acre Ahupuaʻa Waipā looking ma kai. The valley is being managed as a living system rooted in stewardship, cultural resiliency, and agriculture.

from floods, the soil continues to improve, and there are abundant harvests from lands that were once overrun by hau bush. It's also seen in the people themselves. Young people who were raised at Waipā are now returning as adults with their own keiki, maintaining that pilina to ʻāina.

Feeding the community through cultural practice and a continued relationship with the land remains central to this effort. Every Thursday morning, Waipā's staff and community volunteers gather to process cooked kalo into poi, continuing a food justice tradition started more than 40 years ago by the Hawaiian Farmers of Hanalei. Today, Waipā distributes an average of 800 pounds of poi each week to kūpuna and ʻohana at or below cost.

Every Thursday morning for Poi Day, the community gathers to process cooked kalo into poi. What began over 30 years ago as a food justice effort has grown into a vital resource, with Waipā distributing an average of 800 pounds of poi each week to kūpuna and ʻohana at cost.

That same relationship is reflected in the weekly farmers market, where fresh produce grown in the valley is shared directly with the community. Food leaves Waipā

not as product, but as nourishment for the community. Waipā hosts events like Eat the Invasives, where hunters, fishers, chefs, and community members highlight invasive species through a culinary experience that helps attendees understand how to manage them, and the annual Waipā ʻĀina Festival which brings the community together through locally sourced food, cultural activities, and local vendors in support of the foundation and participating entrepreneurs.

Waipā's efforts have expanded beyond growing food. They are also raising future farmers and community advocates. The valley serves as an outdoor classroom, providing educational programs for schools, families, and community members. Participants learn directly from the land, gaining hands-on experience in farming, resource management, and cultural practices. Group visits and volunteer opportunities invite people to step into these practices, whether in the loʻi, helping to mālama the land, or supporting the local community.

Visitors and Hawaiʻi residents are also invited to engage with this land and its efforts through Waipā's regenerative food and farm tours. This is not tourism built on extraction, but an invitation to understand.

“There are visitors who are our kind of people,” Sproat said. “People who come with intention, who want to learn, who want to understand.” Many leave with a deeper connection to the valley, later returning as volunteers, donors, advocates, and friends.

From the coastline of Hanalei Bay to the uplands of Waipā Stream, participants experience the full span of the ahupuaʻa. Along the way, they learn how traditional knowledge and modern tools work together to restore balance. Guides, many of whom are directly involved in the care of the valley, share how resources are managed and why restoration is both environmental and cultural.

Looking ahead, Waipā is entering a new phase focused on strengthening long-term sustainability while remaining grounded in its cultural values. While grants continue to support much of this work, efforts are underway to build more resilient models that can support both the organization and the community it serves.

Waipā continues to evolve as a modern ahupuaʻa at a time when communities across Hawaiʻi face displacement and loss of access to land and resources. After decades of laying the groundwork, it stands today not just as a model, but as a living Hawaiian community. One that feeds its people, teaches its keiki, and sustains ʻāina through daily practice.

Here, culture and knowledge are not only preserved but lived through the work of growing food, caring for the land, and maintaining pilina across generations.

“It’s been such a blessing for me to be able to spend my life doing the kinds of things I did as a kid and bring our Hawaiian community back from the brink of losing our place here,” Sproat said. ■

# Mālama 'Āina and Food Sovereignty in Maui Nui

By Rose Angelo

I've always wondered why groceries are so expensive in Hawai'i – given that its climate is suited to year-round agriculture – and what local communities (and I) could do about it. So, I decided to learn about Native Hawaiian self-determination, mālama 'āina, and food sovereignty from experts in Maui County.

Today, 1.4 million people live in Hawai'i. And, according to the Hawai'i Food Bank, 43% of Native Hawaiians suffered from food insecurity in 2024. But this wasn't always the case.

Prior to western contact, the ahupua'a system produced food for a million people. This system established a reciprocal relationship between people and land and was completely self-sufficient.

Georgia Pinsky, director of the Maui Farmer Support Network, lives off grid in Kaupō, Maui, with her husband and son. They steward their home farm with a passion for organically grown and sustainable foods. "The Hawaiian Islands import 90% of their food, making the islands' food supply system vulnerable to supply chain disruptions," Pinsky noted.

How has there been such a drastic change in food production and security in Hawai'i, and how can Hawaiians come together to steward the land and their communities?

For more than a century, the historical – and contemporary – colonization of Hawai'i has made access to agricultural land, and the freshwater necessary to grow crops, extremely difficult for traditional farmers.

The dispossession of Native Hawaiians from the land, and diversion of streams for corporate sugar and pineapple plantations, undermined the ahupua'a system, degraded soil health, disconnected communities from their ancestral lands, and complicated Native Hawaiians' ability to steward land and produce food self-sufficiently.

Over time, limited access to land and water affected traditional food production and the adoption of processed, imported western foods created health disparities for Native Hawaiians.

"A lot of the health issues that we see in our rural communities are a direct result of the food they're consuming – or the food they're not consuming," Pinsky said. Re-establishing widespread cultivation of, and access to, traditional foods such as kalo, 'ulu, and mai'a (banana) can help close the health gap.

On Maui's southeastern coast is the rural community of Kīpahulu. There, the Kīpahulu 'Ohana, a community-



On Maui's southeastern coast, nonprofit Kīpahulu 'Ohana is stewarding state lands and restoring lo'i kalo, producing food for their isolated rural community. Here, Rose Angelo and Kamalei Pico harvest kalo. - Courtesy Photos



Bobby Pahia of Waikapū and author Rose Angelo.



Lo'i kalo at Kīpahulu provide food and protected environments.

run nonprofit, is stewarding state lands and restoring lo'i kalo. Utilizing the traditional ahupua'a system, they are producing food for their geographically isolated community while also providing protected environments for native and endemic species.

Communities like Kīpahulu prove that re-establishing Native Hawaiian stewardship practices encourage abundant and healthy ecosystems, while providing physical, cultural, and spiritual benefits.

Beyond, its power to heal the land and its people, restoration of ahupua'a practices can also benefit climate resilience.

Dr. Scott Fisher is a professor at Maui College and the director of 'Āina Stewardship for the Hawai'i Land Trust (HILT). One of their projects includes restoring loko i'a (fishponds) at Waihe'e Refuge. Dr. Fisher explained that sea level rise and intensifying storms, precipitation, and drought all affect coastal capacity for agri- and aquaculture.

By restoring loko i'a, sediment deposition from freshwater runoff into the ocean is reduced by 93%, protecting coral reefs and surrounding marine life. As a result, healthy reef systems can better mitigate coastal damage from intensifying storms.

Self-determinism is tied directly to the revival of Hawaiian cultural practices. Bobby Pahia owns 300 acres in Waikapū, Maui, that he leases to individuals and commercial farmers below market rate to increase community food production. "We need to build a mindset around kākou," Pahia said. "Excessive individuality broke the Indigenous mindset of cooperation."

As exemplified by individual and community action on Maui, Hawai'i's current ecological conditions neces-

sitate re-establishment of ahupua'a practices. Doing so will not only increase self-determination and the self-sufficiency of Hawaiian and local communities, but also support food security, environmental resilience, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

Re-establishing food sovereignty for Hawai'i is a kākou effort. Everybody can – and should – mālama 'āina and take steps to increase their individual capacity for self-sufficiency.

To start, Pahia encourages the community to acknowledge past injustices and move forward. "Don't be mad at the system. Fruit of bitterness doesn't bear good fruit," he said, adding that the duality of acknowledging wrong while moving forward to create a better system makes space for self-determination, mālama 'āina, and continuation of culture.

Pahia believes that harboring resentment and bitterness regarding the injustice of past and present colonialism prevents forward progress towards achieving more food-sovereign communities.

He also points out the need to adapt traditional knowledge to modern colonial landscapes. In his work, Pahia has created a "sphere of regenerative knowledge" to encourage his lessees to work with the land and soil biology, rather than utilize commercial and extractive methodologies.

On Moloka'i, Hanohano Naehu, head kia'i loko of non-

## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN MAUI

Continued from page 14

profit Hui o Kuapā, lives by the 'ōlelo no'eau, "He ali'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanaka; the land is chief, people are its servant." Emphasizing that the ahupua'a system created sources of abundant food and environmental benefits, he uses fishponds as educational tools for the island's youth.

Another way to establish food sovereignty is to support and engage with local food producers by participating in fruit stand systems to share the abundance.

"Fruit stands emulate ma uka to ma kai exchange, keep food within rural communities, and reduce food waste and rural community dependence on grocery stores in central Maui," said Pinsky. Fruit stands increase food sovereignty by allowing communities to dictate methods

of food acquisition, rather than reinforcing our reliance on imported food.

Finally, Pahia emphasizes that active political engagement at both the local and state levels will increase pressure on politicians to support, and pass, environmentally and socially beneficial policies.

"We need to encourage local communities to vote," he said, noting that voting community-oriented Native Hawaiians into government positions can increase government support for environmentally beneficial policies. ■

*This article is based upon research for the author's undergraduate honors thesis, "Creating a Food Sovereign Maui: Indigenous Land Management and Agricultural Practices." Please feel free to contact me at [rose.c.angeloz@gmail.com](mailto:rose.c.angeloz@gmail.com) to talk story, share experiences, or for a copy of the thesis.*

# He Mele Oli Kaulana no nā Ali'i

## A Famous Chant Belonging to the Chiefs

Na J. Kimo Alama Keaulana

‘Olepu ka inoa o kekahi ali'i o Maui i ke au kahiko. I kekahi lā, makemake nui 'o ia e 'ai i ka 'ua'u. Ua kāhea aku 'o ia i kekahi kahuna i noho i Kaukini, he mauna i uka o Kahakuloa. 'O Lunaho'omoe ka inoa o ua kahuna nei.

He 'elua keiki kāne a Lunaho'omoe. Kaulana lāua i ka u'i. 'A'ole o kana mai ka nohea o ua mau keiki kāne āna. Mākaukau nō 'o Lunaho'omoe i ka hei manu. Kauoha 'o 'Olepu iā Lunaho'omoe e hei i ka 'ua'u nāna.

‘I aku 'o Lunaho'omoe iā 'Olepu, "A'ohē 'ua'u o uka; 'a'ole kēia 'o ke kau ho'opūnana." Ua lohe 'ia kēia 'ōlelo 'ana e kekahi mau kānaka 'ē a'e a hele aku lākou i mua o ke ali'i. I ke alo o ke ali'i, 'I aku lākou penei, "Ua ho'opuni-puni mai nei 'o Lunaho'omoe iā 'oe, e ka lani ē. Aia nō ka 'ua'u e hei ai."

Ua iho kēia mau kānaka i kai a hei lākou i ka 'ua'u na ke ali'i. Eia nō na'e, ua uua ka 'i'o o nā manu makua. Noho ka 'ino i loko o kēia mau kānaka. Huhū 'o 'Olepu iā Lunaho'omoe! Kauoha aku ke ali'i e pau ke kahuna i ke ahi!

Eia kā, 'o ua mau 'ua'u nei, uua ke nau 'ia! 'A'ohē 'ono! Nui ho'i ke aloha 'o Lunaho'omoe me kāna mau keiki kāne iā 'Olepu. Ua lawelawe pono nō lākou i ko lākou ali'i. Penei ke mele oli i haku 'ia e nā keiki kāne a Lunaho'omoe:

*'Ike iā Kaukini he lawai'a manu  
He 'upena ku'u i ka noe o ko Pōkahi  
Ua ho'opulu 'ia i ka 'ohu kā kīkepa  
Ke nā'i ala i luna o Ka'auana  
Ka uahi i ke kāpeku e hei ai ka  
manu o Pūoali'i  
'O ke ali'i wale nō ka'u makemake  
'O ka luhi o māua me ia nei  
Eia 'ike a... ha'o e...*

'O ka lālani mele 'alua, 'o ia ka hana ma'alea. 'O ka lālani mele 'akolu, 'o ia ka 'ike 'ole o ke ali'i i ka hana 'ino. 'O ka lālani 'ahā, 'o ia ka hana 'ino a nā kānaka ma'alea. 'O ka lālani 'alima, 'o ia ka hana punihei i ke ali'i. 'O ka lālani 'aono, 'o ia ke aloha nui a ke kahuna no kona ali'i. 'O ka lālani 'ahiku, 'o ia nā keiki kāne a ke kahuna.

Auē ka no'eau o ka po'e haku mele o ka wā kahiko. ■

‘Olepu was the name of a certain famous chief of Maui in olden times. One day, He really wanted to eat 'ua'u (petrel). He called to a certain priest who lived at Kaukini, a mountain above Kahakuloa. Lunaho'omoe was the name of this kahuna.

Lunaho'omoe had two sons. They were famed for their good looks. There were none who could compare to the handsomeness of his sons. Lunaho'omoe was skilled at snaring birds. 'Olepu commanded Lunaho'omoe to snare 'ua'u for him.

Lunaho'omoe told 'Olepu, "There are no 'ua'u in the mountains, the 'ua'u are not nesting in this season." Some other men heard this, and they went before the chief. In the chief's presence, they said, "Lunaho'omoe has lied, oh heavenly one. There are 'ua'u to be snared."

These men went to the sea and they snared 'ua'u for the chief. But the meat of the mature birds was tough. Evil was harbored within these men. 'Olepu was furious with Lunaho'omoe! The chief ordered that the priest be put to death by fire!

But these 'ua'u were tough to chew! It was not tasty! Lunaho'omoe and his sons dearly loved 'Olepu. They had faithfully served their chief honestly. Here is the chant that the sons of Lunaho'omoe composed:

*Behold Kaukini [where there is] a fisher  
of birds,  
A net is cast open in the mist of Pōkahi  
Soaked by the slanting fog.  
Reaching higher in the heights of  
Ka'auana.  
The fog flurries to trap the birds of  
Pūoali'i.  
It is solely the chief that is my desire,  
The one whom we both serve along with  
the concerned one here,  
Here it is known... I miss [serving the  
royal one]...*

In the second line, this is the deceptive act. In the third line, this is the unknowing of the chief of this evil act. In the fourth line, this is the evil deed of the deceptive men. In the fifth line, this is the trickery done to the chief. The sixth line is the great love the kahuna had for his chief. The seventh line is about the sons of the kahuna.

Skilled and ingenious were the composers of former times. ■

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# Why is Haleakalā a Sacred Place?

By Hina Kneubuhl,  
Protect Haleakalā Community Coalition

From sea to summit, Haleakalā is a living, breathing, ancestral system whose most sacred part is its piko, or highest point. To understand its sacredness, we must begin at the origin of our islands and the life that fills them.

Our most extensive genealogical chant of creation is the *Kumulipo*. Long before Charles Darwin came up with his theory of evolution, Hawaiians were chanting their universe, from the walewale ho'okumu honua – much like the western idea of a “primordial soup” – to the plants and animals, and eventually to themselves.

In this genealogy, the coral polyp was the first true organism. Then plants were born in the ocean and paired with others born on land. This land/sea connection is a foundational and enduring concept in our worldview, epitomized by the Kāne/Kanaloa water cycle.

After land and sea plants came the fish, birds, insects, and mammals. Collectively, these organisms filled the 'āina and created the foundation for human life, which was the last to emerge.

As the muli loa, or last born, in this long line of life forms, we honor them all as kūpuna, or ancestors, and we show our gratitude to them through respect and protection.

I want to be clear here that we don't choose to stand up for the 'ua'u and the 'āhinahina, for example. Rather, as Kumu Kīoipe Raymond has put it, we have a familial obligation to do so. This is also why the first rule is to take only what you need and no more. Hoarding is abhorrent and forbidden, as it's unsustainable and breaks the contract with our family of life.

Our akua, our deities, also come from the Pō. Other genealogies tell us of the unions of various akua and the birth of our islands. Wākea and Papa came together and the first islands Papa birthed were Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaho'olawe. This is part of the reason that Kaho'olawe is considered a kalana (land area) belonging to the Honua'ula district of Maui.

Among the many gifts of the god Kāne are sunlight and freshwater. In concert with Kanaloa, whose realm is the ocean, they are the water cycle. The abundant wai of East Maui activates the fertility of Papa (in her many



On Haleakalā, the land from where the forest begins up to the summit is considered a wao akua (realm of gods). The summit itself is called the piko - this is where Haleakalā was connected to its mother, Papa. While the physical piko was severed at birth, an energetic connection remains to Papa in her forms as Haumea. Thus, through its piko, Haleakalā draws nourishment from Haumea and our celestial 'ohana and that life force feeds the entire, living, breathing mountain system. - Photo: Masako Cordray

Haumea forms), driving primary productivity on land and enabling the symphony of life that came to be on Haleakalā.

These kūpuna plants and animals arrived and evolved there for nearly 2 million years after Papa gave birth. This created what biologist Art Medeiros refers to as a lei, or garland of forest, that once went all the way around Haleakalā, comprising roughly 450 native species in habitats from rainforest to dryforest. Many of these species are endemic – found nowhere else in the world.

The ko'olau, or northeast part of that lei of forest is a 100,000-acre watershed that produces 60 billion gallons of water annually, on which we, the people, survive. It does this because we have protected it and limited the amount of human activity there.

This is one of several reasons that the land from where the forest begins all the way to the summit is called the wao akua, or the realm of the gods.

This brings us to the summit itself, which is called the piko, or navel. This is where Haleakalā was connected to its mother, Papa. While the physical piko was severed at birth, an energetic connection remains to Papa in her forms as Haumea.

Haleakalā, through its piko, draws nourishment from Haumea and our celestial 'ohana and that maui, that

life force, feeds the entire living, breathing, mountain system. The symphony of life we talked about earlier, which includes us as Kānaka, is nourished through this critical point of connection.

In fact, when we go to the summit for special occasions or ceremonies and our piko align with that piko, we experience an especially profound connection to life force that is unique to that place. This is at the heart of why obstructions and developments at the summit are highly detrimental.

So, the piko draws down this nourishment and feeds the 'āhinahina, the 'ua'u, the koa, the 'ohi'a, and all the forms of life on the mountain. Amazingly, Haumea is found both high above in the heat of the stars and deep below in the earth's molten core; as above, so below. Haumea's daughter, Pele, is embodied in the most recent flows on our mountain, where molten rock once again broke the surface and formed new land.

Some folks tend to think of Pele's activity as confined to the lua, or crater portion of the national park, but we must break out

of this fragmented mindset that is not in line with our cultural history.

Pele's activity spreads across the whole kualono (ridge-line) of Haleakalā. Entire hula traditions are devoted to the dances that honor this akua and her wondrous work across the mountain. Much of the extent of her influence is within Honua'ula and the ahupua'a of Pāpa'anui.

Pele eventually went on to Hawai'i Island, but the goddesses Lilinoe and Poli'ahu continued to shape the summit and the crater with their clouds, mist, rain, snow and ice. Lilinoe is still with us today, casting her kīhei of clouds around the mountain, feeding many areas with her gentle rain and fog drip, and helping to regulate temperatures.

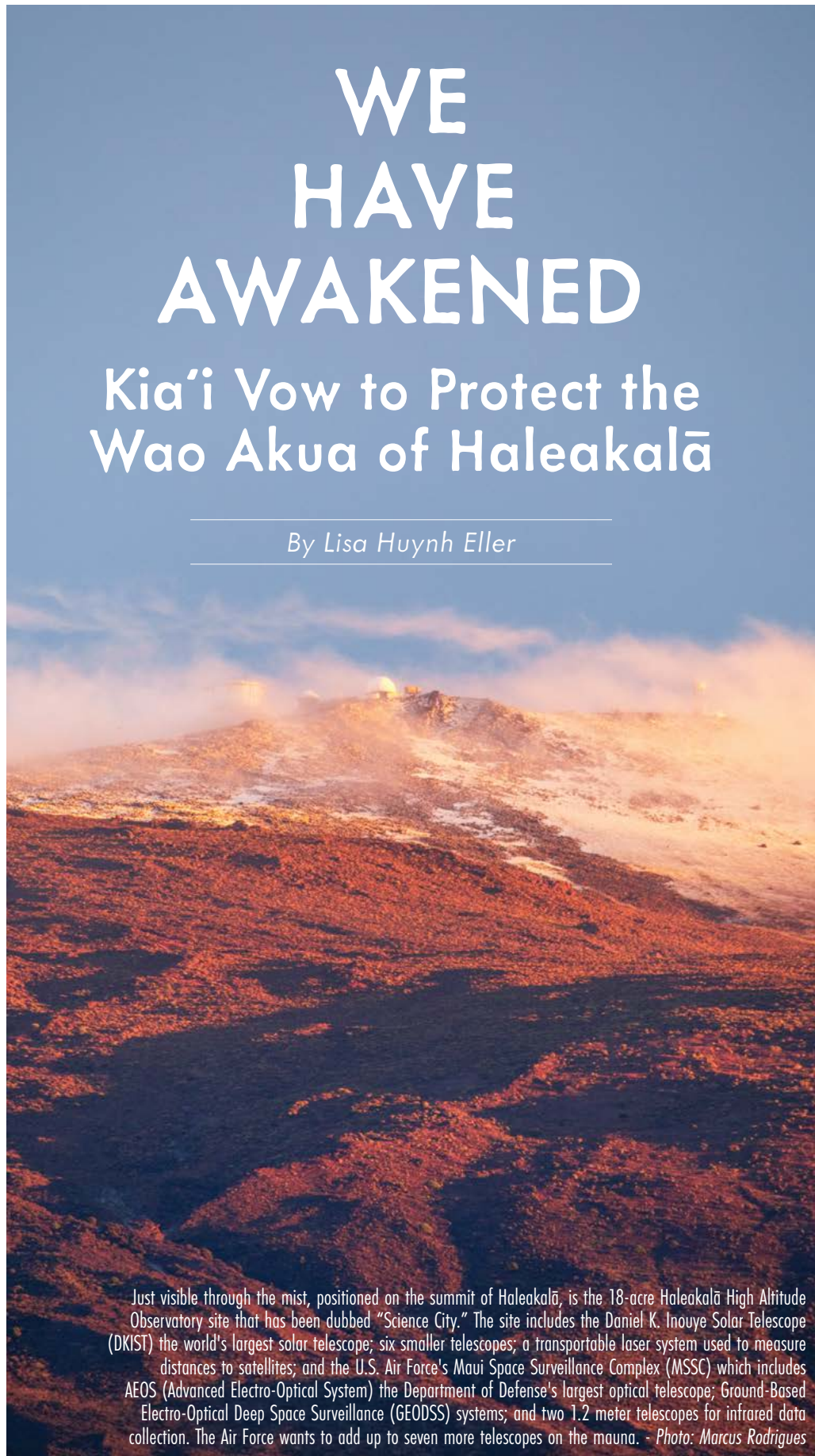
This is just a fraction of the knowledge that exists about Haleakalā, the kuahiwi that is our malu (sanctuary), our life source, and the only home many of us will ever know. Its sacred summit is second to none and telescopes do not belong there. We will forever stand in protection of this piko of nourishment and connection. ■

*Adapted from a presentation at the Hanohano 'o Haleakalā forum. For the full version of this presentation, go to [protecthaleakala.com](http://protecthaleakala.com), hit the “watch livestream” button, and advance to 35 minutes.*

# WE HAVE AWAKENED

## Kia'i Vow to Protect the Wao Akua of Haleakalā

By Lisa Huynh Eller



Just visible through the mist, positioned on the summit of Haleakalā, is the 18-acre Haleakalā High Altitude Observatory site that has been dubbed "Science City." The site includes the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST) the world's largest solar telescope; six smaller telescopes; a transportable laser system used to measure distances to satellites; and the U.S. Air Force's Maui Space Surveillance Complex (MSSC) which includes AEOS (Advanced Electro-Optical System) the Department of Defense's largest optical telescope; Ground-Based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance (GEODSS) systems; and two 1.2 meter telescopes for infrared data collection. The Air Force wants to add up to seven more telescopes on the mauna. - Photo: Marcus Rodrigues

"We love Haleakalā. It is in our bones. It is in our body. It's in everything about us that we know we must protect Haleakalā," said Mikahala Helm, long-time Maui community leader, educator and activist, speaking in March at Hanohano 'o Haleakalā, a community-created forum.

"Uncle Les [Kuloloio] shared with us the wisdom of our kūpuna: You don't just go up there any old time and do whatever you want [because of] the wai, the water. You do anything on top, it's going to affect the wai down below."

Helm and Lei'ohu Ryder, both members of Kilakila 'o Haleakalā, represented the forebears of a decades-old movement to protect the sacred summit at the event, which drew about 100 people.

Hanohano was organized in protest to the military's desire for more development on the summit. The U.S. Air Force (DAF), which has been operating a surveillance complex on Haleakalā since the 1960s, wants to construct up to seven more telescopes to maintain what it calls "space domain awareness."

DAF released its draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the proposed project, known as the Air Force Maui Optical and Supercomputing Site Small Telescope Advanced Research Facility (AMOS STAR) in January 2026, with plans to begin construction this year.

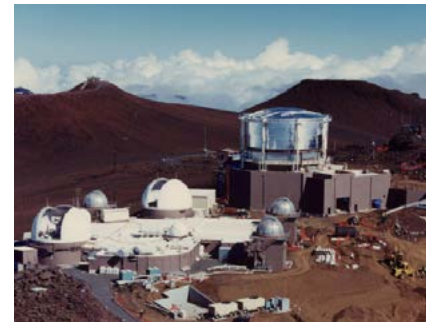
For many Native Hawaiians, the DAF proposal is the latest chapter in a generational struggle.

Kilakila 'O Haleakalā was formed in 2005 to protest the installation of a telescope on the summit of Haleakalā. "The motivation to stand up for Haleakalā is simply put: Haleakalā is sacred. That's what led us to the 20-year journey of standing and honoring and breathing this knowing from eons ago," Ryder said emotionally, speaking at Hanohano.

Construction of the telescope (later named the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope) was completed in 2021 despite community objections. But in the intervening years, the movement to protect Haleakalā survived and grew.

There are now three community groups representing multiple generations of kia'i who are pushing against further development on Haleakalā. In addition to Kilakila, there are Kāko'o Haleakalā and Ho'oulu Lāhui. The groups, collectively known as the Protect Haleakalā Community Coalition, organized the March forum.

"We created Hanohano 'o Haleakalā as a way to break out of the mold



The U.S. Air Force's existing Maui Space Surveillance Complex on the summit of Haleakalā. In January 2023, 700 gallons of diesel fuel leaked into the mauna after a mechanical error.

- Photo: NASA, Public Domain

SEE WE HAVE AWAKENED ON PAGE 18

If you're tracking near-Earth orbit objects, I would think you could do that from a [lot] of other places.

HINA KNEUBUHL

## WE HAVE AWAKENED

Continued from page 17

of engagements that have been the same for years,” said Hina Kneubuhl, coalition member and event speaker. “We created it to lay down a challenge in front of them [the military]: Will you engage with us on our own terms? Do you care enough to listen to information we consider important about our place?”

Until that point, the U.S. Air Force controlled the DEIS public process, wherein testifiers were each given three minutes to speak. But Hanohano ‘o Haleakalā shifted these dynamics and gave cultural practitioners, educators and kia’i the time they needed to convey the importance of Haleakalā as a spiritual-cultural-environmental connection point.

“[The summit] is where Haleakalā was connected to its mother, Papa ... The symphony of life we talked about earlier, which includes us as Kānaka, is nourished through this critical point of connection,” said Kneubuhl who spoke for about 15-minutes.

“This is at the heart of why obstructions and developments at the summit, in particular, are highly detrimental” (see “Why is Haleakalā a Sacred Place” on page 16).

“One of the things that came out of [Hanohano] was [that the U.S. Air Force] engaged with Hawaiians on the terms that we set, which was huge for us,” Kneubuhl said.

“Another thing that was accomplished is they heard perspectives out of our mouths, face to face. The Air Force having to answer our questions was a huge outcome. There is nothing in their process that mandates

they answer our questions,” she added.

Senior military advisor Noelani Kalipi attended the event along with members of the 15th Space Surveillance Squadron – the DAF group that operates the surveillance complex – including its commander, Lt. Col. Doug Thornton.

Responding to a question about whether AMOS STAR will increase Hawai’i’s vulnerability as a target in war, Thornton said, “I understand the fear and a military presence can make a location a target ... we’re not here [on Maui] about directing weapons. Our purpose is to watch and protect objects in space. This capability serves as a power deterrent across the world, making conflict less likely to extend in space by ensuring the stability of the space environment.

“We believe this defensive mission contributes more to the safety of Hawai’i by deterring conflict than it does [by] creating risk,” Thornton added.

Kalipi, who runs the newly formed Hawai’i Coordination Cell under the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said she believes Hanohano was the first event of its kind (public-led with military participation) on Maui. She added that other groups on O’ahu have expressed interest in hosting similar events.

“What I really appreciated about the Hanohano event was the opportunity to humanize the discussion. For the community to say, ‘this is our place, and so let’s talk about it. Let us ask you the questions so that everybody can hear what the answers are,’” she said.

Preston Schlachter, strategic outreach chief for Combat Forces Command Public Affairs issued a subsequent statement saying, “We appreciated the opportunity to attend the Hanohano ‘o Haleakalā event and hear the community’s feedback firsthand. These perspectives provided valuable context for the EIS process. The written comment period closed April 15, 2026. The next step is to



Hanohano ‘o Haleakalā was a community-led forum in March to discuss the U.S. Air Force’s plans to build seven more telescopes on Haleakalā. It was a way to engage with the military on the community’s terms, instead of through the military-controlled draft EIS public process as in the past. Instead of limiting testifiers to 3-minutes, the forum allowed cultural practitioners and kia’i time to fully express their mana’o. Speakers included (l-r) UH Maui Interim Associate VP for Academic Affairs Kahele Dukelow; cultural practitioner and entrepreneur Hina Kneubuhl (representing Protect Haleakalā Community Coalition); UH Maui Professor Emeritus Mikahala Helm with composer/musician and peace educator Lei’ohu Ryder (representing Kilakila ‘o Haleakalā); and UH Maui Associate Professor of Hawaiian Studies Kaleikoa Ka’eo. On the far right Kumu Hula Hōkūlani Holt Padilla asks a question at the forum. - Photos: Courtesy of Protect Haleakalā



Haleakalā shelters a 100,000-acre watershed that produces 60 billion gallons of water each year for Maui. - Photo: Masako Cordray

conduct a thorough review of the officially submitted input. Public feedback will be incorporated and considered in the final EIS, scheduled for publication in the Fall of 2026 with a Record of Decision to follow.”

By all accounts, residents, community leaders and elected officials vehemently oppose any further development on Haleakalā.

A public scoping memo at the end of DAF’s 516-page DEIS reflected that 89% of all public testimony was in opposition to the military’s proposal.

This past March, the Maui County Council unanimously passed a second resolution (the first was passed in June 2025) urging the U.S. Air Force to stop its plans and urging federal land managers to deny any permits for the project.

“As council members, we are the representatives of our community, and I’ve only heard testimony in opposition [to this proposal]. It’s our responsibility to ensure that, as their representatives, we are amplifying their voices and getting it on the record,” said Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, the Maui County councilwoman who introduced both resolutions.

Along with the cultural significance of Haleakalā that Kneubuhl expressed in her remarks, the strong opposition to the military’s proposal is because Haleakalā’s summit is at the top of the ahupua’a where downstream water originates - as well as being home to several endangered and endemic species.

“The Air Force wants to build seven telescope domes on one of the most sacred mountains in the Pacific which is ecologically and environmentally very sensitive. And while the Air Force admits it will cause significant and irreversible harms, it’s still asking the public to trust that telling contractors to be respectful is enough to mitigate those harms,” said Maxx Phillips, Hawai‘i and Pacific Islands director and senior attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity.

“One of the glaring deficiencies with the DEIS, from an environmental standpoint, is that a federal biologist walked the site and found two (burrows) of our endangered petrels – and this is exactly where they want to put the telescopes. The Air Force’s response was to call that a ‘non-significant’ impact,” Phillips said.



Senior military advisor Noelani Kalipi responds to a question at the forum. With her are members of the Air Force 15th Space Surveillance Squadron.



About 100 community members gathered at UH Maui in Kahului on March 11 for the Hanohano ‘o Haleakalā forum.

Two other endangered species found on the summit are the ‘āhinahina or Haleakalā silversword and the ‘ōpe‘ape‘a (Hawaiian hoary bat), Hawai‘i’s only native mammal. “Haleakalā silversword has already lost 90% of its population to climate change,” Phillips noted. “The Air Force wants to add construction traffic through its last remaining critical habitat and call that ‘discountable.’”

Coupled with the intertwined cultural and environmental concerns for Haleakalā are fears rooted in the military’s documented history of poor environmental stewardship. In 2023, about 700 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from a generator at the Maui Space Surveillance Complex (MSSC). DAF said the spill would take seven years to clean up.

“The U.S. military has polluted and destroyed this land for far too long with places like Kaho‘olawe, which even

to this day has yet to be cleared and cleaned in totality,” said UH Maui Associate Professor Kaleikoa Ka‘eo, speaking at Hanohano. Above him, as he spoke, was a presentation slide entitled: “A Pattern of Military Destruction & Harm.”

“There’s the U.S. Navy who continues to lie to this day over the poisoning [at Red Hill]. Let’s be clear, this is poisoning of our water; that which gives us life is the most sacred. That’s why places [like Haleakalā] were set aside as sacred.”

Another issue is the legitimacy of land ownership and management on the summit.

The proposed project site is part of a larger Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) parcel that was set aside for federal use in October 1957 via executive order 1808, signed by Territorial Governor William Quinn. But whether the federal government and its agencies actually had legal claim to do that is debatable.

“The United States’ assumption of control over Hawaiian Kingdom government and crown lands in 1898 remains the most significant of the unresolved claims of the Hawaiian people,” said Maui attorney Lance Collins.

The Protect Haleakalā Community Coalition introduced two petitions to slow or stop the Air Force’s plans for the summit. One petition, which collected nearly 2,000 signatures, unsuccessfully sought to extend the DEIS public commentary for an additional four months. Their other petition is to deny the MSSC lease renewal in 2031.

The online petitions, coalition website, and social media accounts show how new generations of kia‘i are using technology to reach more people.

Hanohano ‘o Haleakalā was livestreamed to 170 viewers, and the archived video on Protect Haleakalā’s website has garnered hundreds more views since then. Though plans for construction on Haleakalā have changed over the years, the resistance endures. This gives movement leaders hope for the future.

“There’s a whole new crew of voices. This is the power of aloha ‘āina. The U.S. military doesn’t understand this,” said Ka‘eo. “We have awakened. Our souls have been born again, and we’re going to do whatever is necessary.”



Haleakalā is already overly abused and occupied by this military regime. It’s an industrial area. They use industrial equipment. They use industrial toxic chemicals up on the summit ... and yet [the summit] has the highest level of conservation protections. Supposedly.

KALEIKOA KA‘EO



In 2015, the Maui community, keiki to kūpuna, alongside kia‘i from across the pae ‘āina gathered on Haleakalā in peaceful protest to block the transport of materials for the construction of the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope on the mauna’s summit. Before the evening ended, 20 people were arrested after law enforcement cut through PVC pipes used to link the kia‘i to one another in a nonviolent blockade. The telescope was completed in 2021 despite widespread community objections. It is the world’s largest solar telescope and was funded by the National Science Foundation. - Photo: Bryan Berkowitz

# Register Now for LT's Summer 2026 Programs!

By Brian Esmeralda

Registration is now open for Lili'uokalani Trust's (LT) summer term programs! Your kamale'i (youth ages 0 to 26) can thrive in one of our programs which provide engaging, culturally grounded experiences for keiki and 'ōpio and meaningful support for 'ohana across Hawai'i.



look forward to a full season of programming, along with engagement opportunities offered throughout the summer.

Programs will be available at all LT service locations across the pae 'āina, making it easier for 'ohana to find a program that fits their needs. LT's programs are designed to strengthen identity, build skills, and nurture well-being to help kamale'i on their path to thriving.

'Ohana are invited to explore the full lineup of offerings in LT's Summer Program Catalog, available on our website ([onipaa.org/browse-programs-and-services](http://onipaa.org/browse-programs-and-services)).

To begin the enrollment process, 'ohana should complete LT's General Interest Form. This short form helps our team better understand your 'ohana's goals and guides you through the next steps to connect with the right program.

We look forward to helping your kamale'i

thrive through our many program offerings! ■

*Bryan Esmeralda is the director of external relations at Lili'uokalani Trust.*



Kamale'i participating in LT's 2025 summer culinary program share mea 'ono with their 'ohana at the end of term hō'ike. Culinary programs are one of many program offerings during the summer term at Lili'uokalani Center. - Courtesy Photo

Summer term programs are generally available from June 1 through August 7, providing kamale'i with safe, enriching, and fun places to learn, grow, and connect while school is out. 'Ohana can

# Nā Mea Makamae Hawai'i ma Lākana 2

Na Kalani Akana, Ph.D.



Aloha e nā makamaka heluhelu. I kēlā mahina aku nei, ua ho'omaka kākou e 'ike i nā mea makamae Hawai'i ma ka Hale Hō'ike'ike Pelekania ma Lākana, 'o ia ho'i, nā mea waiwai hiwahiwa ma ka hō'ike'ike hou 'o "Hawai'i: a kingdom crossing oceans."

He 'ike lihi ka nāna 'ana a'e i nā waiwai ma kēia 'atikala, no laila ke paipai nei au ia 'oe e huli a loa'a i kekahi kope nou. Hō'ike ka puke i nā mea makamae a pau. Hikiki ke kū'ai i kekahi puke ma UH Press.

'O ka mea kupanaha o ua hō'ike'ike la, 'o ia ka hana huliāmahi 'ana ma waena o ka Hale Hō'ike'ike Pelekania me nā po'e hana no'eau 'ōiwi Hawai'i. 'A'ole ia hana huliāmahi he hana ma'a mau no nā hale hō'ike'ike o ka wā ma mua, akā he 'onina huluhia nō ia.

'A'ole e hō'ike wale 'ia ana i nā mea makamae Hawai'i me he kiahai (trophy) wale la, akā e kūkākūkā ana nā limahana hale hō'ike'ike me nā po'e 'ōiwi nona ka 'ike e pili ana i nā mea makamae Hawai'i i mea e loa'a ai kekahi mo'olelo kūpono no nā mea waiwai Hawai'i.

I kekahi manawa, 'a'ohe 'ike, 'a'ohe mo'oha'awina (provenance), e pili ana i kekahi mea makamae. 'O ke kūkākūkā 'ana ma waena o ka hale hō'ike'ike me ka po'e 'ōiwi he hana ia e ho'ākāka ai i ka pono o ka mea waiwai i nā kānaka Hawai'i.

E la'a, ua nānā a kālailai 'ia kekahi "moena hulu" a i 'ole kekahi "epane" - 'o ia nā

hua 'ōlelo i kapa 'ia ai i ka mea hulu kupaiānaha a ka Hawai'i e ka hale hō'ike'ike. Ua kāpili 'ia kekahi "moena" me kekahi mau kaula hulu - e like me nā kaula hulu no ka ho'ohulu 'ana i kekahi mau 'ano mahiole. Aia ma nā lihi papamoe o ka "epane" kekahi mau kaula kīlepalepa.

Na kēia mau kaula kīlepalepa me kona 'ano papamoe i ho'oma'oe i kuhiakau (hypothesis) - ua wahī 'ia kēia ma kekahi kino kanaka paha, ki'i akua paha a nāki'i 'ia me kēnā wahi kaula kīlepalepa. No laila, 'a'ole ia he moena akā he 'ano 'epane nō. Malī'a paha ua like kona wahī 'ana ma ke kino e like me nā kā'ei pale kaua a i 'ole me ke kā'ei kapu a Līloa. A ua no'ono'o 'ia, no nā alī'i kēia mau mea ho'owehiwehi.

'O kekahi mea makamae hoihoi ia'u 'o ia kekahi 'ano lei mākuakua a'u i 'ike mua ai ma ku'u wā 'ōpio, 'o ia kekahi "lei" me kekahi mahiole ma ke ki'i a John Weber i kahaki'i ai (nānā ki'i 2). Ua wili 'ia kekahi mau kaula hulu, e like me nā kaula hulu i wehewehe 'ia ma luna, ma waho o kekahi kapa pepe'ekue. 'Akahi nō ku'u 'ike maka 'ana i kēlā mea waiwai hiwahiwa o Kaua'i i loko o ka puke. No nā kanaka e hiki 'ole ke hele i Lākana, na ka puke e hō'ike iā kākou Kānaka i kēia mau mea laha'ole keu a ka u'i. ■

*Kalani Akana, Ph.D., is a kumu of hula, oli and 'ōlelo Hawai'i. He has authored numerous articles on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.*

*To read this in English go to [kawaiola.news](http://kawaiola.news).*



Marques Marzan e kālailai ana i ka "moena"? "Epane"?



Ke ki'i a John Weber o kekahi ali'i no Atooi (Kaua'i).

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## Kī: Medicine in a Familiar Plant

By Jodi Leslie Matsuo, DrPH, RDN

Brought to Hawai'i by the first Polynesian settlers, kī (ti-leaf) was among a select group of canoe plants valued for its versatility. It was used for sandals, house thatching, plates, cooking utensils, raincoats, and cordage.

Like lū'au, the leaves were commonly used to wrap foods for cooking in the imu, helping to retain moisture and flavor.

Depending on a person's condition, different parts of the plant - leaves, flowers, or shoots - were useful medicinally as well.

Leaves were applied externally, often slightly crushed, and placed on the forehead or body to help relieve fever and headache. They were also used to cover the body or used in specific areas to reduce pain and inflammation and soothe sore muscles.

In addition, kī leaves were used as bandages to wrap injured or fractured areas. Kī flowers were traditionally eaten raw or juiced, often combined with other plants in preparations for asthma, other lung conditions, and even nasal polyps. Young leaves and shoots were used as a decongestant.

Kī was not only a remedy itself, but also a tool that supported the broader practice of healing, as leaves were also used to wrap or deliver herbal preparations, serving as a natural way to hold, carry, or apply other plant medicines.

Modern science has identified compounds within the plant that help explain its usefulness for these common ailments. One of these is shikimic acid, a compound used in the manufacture of the antiviral drug oseltamivir (more commonly known as Tamiflu), which



is widely prescribed to treat influenza A and B. Shikimic acid has also been studied for its anti-inflammatory and immune-supporting effects.

Kī also contains other important plant compounds, including flavonoids and steroidal saponins. Flavonoids are widely studied for their anti-

oxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, including asthma, congestion, and joint pain such as arthritis. Steroidal saponins, another compound found in kī, have shown antimicrobial activity, helping to limit the growth and spread of bacteria, fungi, and parasites.

Even today, there are simple ways kī can be used for everyday support. For fever or headache, fresh kī leaves can be rinsed, gently crushed or bruised to release their natural compounds, and placed across the forehead or over the head, replacing them as they dry or begin to wilt.

For congestion, young shoots can be boiled in water, and the steam carefully inhaled from a safe distance. For breathing support, kī flowers can be eaten raw or mixed into foods such as poi.

As only green kī was used in pre-Western times, it would be wise to choose these over the colorful varieties commonly seen today. As with any natural approach, these natural therapies should be seen as complementary, rather than as a replacement for medical care when needed.

Growing alongside buildings in urban areas, throughout the countryside, and used in lei, kī reminds us that some of the most familiar plants carry both practical value and deeper meaning.

And that caring for our health can begin right in our own backyard. ■

## Kōlea: A Symbol of Resilience

By Kalei Nu'uhiwa

This morning, I find myself reflecting on the environmental events that have shaped Hawai'i over the past eight years.

We have experienced the Leilani Estates lava flow, which transformed a significant part of Puna, endured the disruptions brought by COVID-19, witnessed the Maunaloa eruption, faced the devastation of the Lahaina fires and more recently, saw massive flooding that cleared out ancient waterways, washing away everything man-made in its path.

On top of that, the year-long Halema'uma'u eruption has continued, as if Pele herself is renovating her homeland, undeterred by the national park's presence. It has been a lot to endure, but we persevere.

Amid these reflections, I look out my window and spot my annual winter visitor, a kōlea, or golden plover, that I have named Smitty, searching for worms, grubs, and whatever delicacies he can find in the grass. He has been coming to my yard for eight years, just as long as these environmental changes have been occurring.

Before his arrival, my dogs would chase away all birds, but this kōlea was either determined or clever enough to reach a truce, allowing him to return every winter. I call him "him" because he proudly displays his black cummerbund and tuxedo plumage, ready for his elegant dinner before he migrates back to his summer home on the Alaskan tundra.

This bird makes me ponder why kōlea are sometimes given a bad reputation, seen as symbols of malihini, tourists, who come to Hawai'i, take what they want, and leave without giving back to the community. Yet, Hawaiian mo'olelo (stories) tell a different account.

Kōlea were seen as messengers and kāhuna (priests or experts), as told in the



story of Papa and Wākea, where in a kōlea reveals Wākea's getting a little sumtin' sumtin' on the side with another wahine. Kōlea feathers were used in kahuna capes, and they also provided sustenance, being caught with long 'ilima or 'ulei snares.

According to a 1909 article in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, boys would set up snares in fields where kōlea gathered before their migration, using 'uhini, locusts, as bait. The boys would hide in the grass, calling out "Kīkīpē! Kīkīpē!" to entice the birds, and sometimes teasing, "'Oleha! 'Oleha! Come here, land here, the eyes are set!"

When the kōlea went for the bait, their feet would get caught in the twine. The article mentions that kōlea breast meat is as tasty as akule fish. I realize I've digressed, but this history is an important part of how these birds are woven into Hawaiian life.

Personally, I see kōlea as remarkable navigators and timekeepers.

Every year, they travel between Hawai'i and Alaska with incredible precision, arriving just before the fall equinox and departing after the spring equinox. They are descendants of survivors, adapting and persevering despite modern challenges.

To me, kōlea are symbols of resilience. They remind me that each of us is descended from generations who endured and adapted to adversity, whether environmental, social, or otherwise. Our ancestors, just like the kōlea, survived and thrived by navigating challenges and changes.

So, perhaps the trials of the last eight years are challenges for us to navigate and endure together. The kōlea reminds me that resilience is in our DNA and that, like these birds, we can find our way through adversity.

To you, Mr. Smitty Kōlea, I offer my gratitude for the lessons and reminders you bring each year. Safe travels, and we make ready for your return again to my yard, a symbol of hope and perseverance. ■

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# May Day is Lei Day on Our Homesteads

By KipuKai Kualii

**M**ay Day in Hawai'i – known to all of us as Lei Day – is more than a celebration of flowers. It's a celebration of who we are as a people. It's the visible, tangible expression of aloha shared between 'ohana, across generations, and grounded in our deep connection to 'āina.

Established in 1929, Lei Day came at a time when Hawai'i was rapidly changing. Yet even then, our kūpuna understood the importance of holding tight to culture. The lei, in all its forms, represents that continuity. Whether made from pua, lau, shells or seeds, each lei carries meaning: love, honor, remembrance, and relationship. It is something we give freely, but never casually.

For our Hawaiian Homestead communities, Lei Day has always been something more personal. It's not just a festival, it's a practice. It's kūpuna teaching mo'opuna how to gather responsibly, how to prepare materials, how to haku, wili, and kui.

It's learning not just the "how," but the "why." Why we mālama the plants. Why we honor the spaces we gather from. Why we give before we receive. Just last month, the world and all of us here at home were able to enjoy so many different, beautiful lei at the Merrie Monarch Festival.

Long before Lei Day was formally recognized, our ali'i understood the power of cultural expression. King Kalākaua is well known for bringing back hula, chant, and ceremony during a time when they were being pushed aside. His commitment to our cultural



practices helped ensure that traditions like lei-making and ceremonial exchange would survive and thrive.

Likewise, Queen Lili'uokalani carried that same spirit through her music and leadership, grounding our people in identity during one of the most difficult periods in our

history.

When Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole advocated for the 1921 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, his vision was about more than land – it was about restoring our people to 'āina and, with it, restoring our practices, our dignity, and our ability to care for ourselves and each other. Over the past 100 years, homesteaders have carried that kuleana forward in very real ways.

Across our homesteads, from Anahola to Papakōlea and Waiohuli to Pana'ewa, we celebrate Lei Day in our schools, our churches, and our community gatherings. You'll see keiki performing hula, representing each island with its own lei and color. You'll hear mele that connect us to place. And you'll see the quiet but powerful moments: kūpuna sitting with grandchildren, stringing lei and sharing stories.

Lei Day reminds us that culture is not something we inherit passively, but something we live day in and day out; something we protect by celebrating. For Hawaiian homesteaders, that responsibility is clear. As we fight for our homestead legacy birthright, we also fight for our culture.

We know a lei is never just a lei. It's a connection to our kūpuna, to our 'āina, and to each other. And that's worth celebrating – not just on May Day, but every day! Happy Lei Day! ■

## E NHLC...

### What is the difference between co-management and co-stewardship?

By Devin Kamealoha Forrest, Esq.,  
NHLC Research Specialist



**C**o-management and co-stewardship are land and resource agreements between two or more entities, often including terms about access, caretaking, and costs.

Co-management often involves a law or court order directing specific entities to make an agreement. Co-stewardship is generally voluntarily entered into by various stakeholders that are caring for an area or resource.

Indigenous peoples around the world are increasingly using both kinds of agreements to secure legal rights necessary to fulfill traditional kuleana to mālama native lands, waters, and natural resources for which title has been lost following colonization.

Often, these agreements are forged from recognized Indigenous duties and rights to places of cultural significance. These arrangements also may be encouraged or required by law or administrative policy.

In Hawai'i, we have secured a variety of co-management and co-stewardship arrangements between the State of Hawai'i, the federal government, and many organizations who have deep ties and understanding of the land and other public trust resources.

One of the larger co-management areas is the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument where state, federal, and Native Hawaiian organizations co-manage the nuanced relationship of people, place, and resource.

We also have more local co-management areas that overlay co-stewardship areas like in Hā'ena, Kaua'i, where there is co-management of the state park and its fisheries and co-stewardship of certain wahi pana (storied places), in the same area.

Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS") 188-22.9 (2015), is the enabling statute for the community based subsistence fishing area (CBSFA) which created a pathway for the state to work with the Hā'ena community. Under the statute, the community and enforcement agencies created and passed

rules that regulate the method of fishing in the Hā'ena area.

This allows for the traditions of Hā'ena to be the "law of the land" and gives the enforcement agencies guidance on how to protect and co-manage the area as it has been for hundreds of years.

There are also relationships that look like co-stewardship or co-management because cultural practitioners found it necessary to use other means of engaging with government processes.

Some communities have used long term leases or a long term renewable permitting structure to protect and perpetuate practices on culturally significant and sensitive areas. The Fish and Wildlife Service at the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge has been working with community to ensure cultural accesses to various places within their management area through such a permitting schema.

Negotiating these agreements can be challenging requiring substantial time, painstakingly developed relationships with diverse stakeholders, and varying legal and political processes for decision-making. It can also be a long process to articulate what the community needs and wants for the nature of the co-management or stewardship.

When successful, however, these agreements can be meaningful tools for perpetuating our culture, protecting our 'āina and wai, and protecting the role of Kānaka voices and traditional knowledge, no matter the political or social climate. He kā'e'a'e'a o ke kai loa, 'a'ohē 'ale e hopo ai – seek the far off places and do not fear the massive swells. ■

*E Nīnau iā NHLC provides general information about the law. E Nīnau iā NHLC is not legal advice. You can contact NHLC about your legal needs by calling NHLC's offices at 808-521-2302. You can also learn more about NHLC at [nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org](http://nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org).*

*The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC) is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to the advancement and protection of Native Hawaiian identity and culture. Each month, NHLC attorneys will answer questions about legal issues relating to Native Hawaiian rights and protections, including issues regarding housing, land, water, and traditional and cultural practice. You can submit questions at [Ninau.NHLC@nhlchi.org](mailto:Ninau.NHLC@nhlchi.org).*

## EŌ Mai, e Kuleana Land Holders!

**THE KULEANA LAND TAX** exemption helps Native Hawaiians keep their ancestral lands by reducing the rising cost of property taxes. All four counties have ordinances in place that allow eligible kuleana land owners to pay minimal to zero property taxes. Applications are available on each county's website.

For more information on kuleana land tax ordinances go to [www.oha.org/kuleanaland](http://www.oha.org/kuleanaland) and for assistance with genealogy verification, contact the Office of Hawaiian Affairs at 808-594-1835 or 808-594-1888.



# WESPAC Pursues Commercial Fishing in Papahānaumokuākea

Hau'oli and Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco

**O**n March 24, 2026, despite massive opposition and historical environmental abuses, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC) voted to restore commercial fishing in culturally and ecologically vital ocean areas across Moananuiākea including Papahānaumokuākea, Pacific Islands Heritage (PIH), Muliava (Rose) Atoll, and Marianas Trench Marine National Monuments.

Though the meeting was scheduled to adjourn by 5:00 p.m., the highly debated topic brought an overwhelming amount of written and public comments, running the meeting past 8:00 p.m. Comments came from both sides, however, it was clear that the majority were Indigenous voices from across the Pacific collectively opposing commercial fishing in protected marine areas.

Individual community members and organization representatives provided powerful testimonies on upholding the strongest protections in these places for the benefit of future generations. Many also highlighted the irreversible consequences of over-extraction and exploitation of ocean resources. Others pointed out that commercial fishing risks repeating past mistakes that continue to cause harm today.

Despite the obvious public opposition, WESPAC still voted to allow commercial fishing in all four Pacific marine monuments. Specifically, for Papahānaumokuākea, they voted to open the 3-200 nautical miles (nm) area for bottomfish and pelagic fisheries.

The delegate representing Hawai'i was the only WESPAC member who voted "no" to allow commercial fishing in any of the marine monuments. All others voted "yes."

WESPAC members continue to advance their commercial fishing agenda in the Pacific through three recurring claims: 1) commercial fishing is a cultural practice and right of Indigenous Pacific Island peoples; 2) these protected areas are "American waters, and American fishermen have the right to fish there;" and 3) Pacific Island peoples carry an unfair burden of global marine conservation goals.



These claims are misleading, and fundamentally distort Indigenous values, histories, and responsibilities.

First, there is nothing culturally Indigenous about the industrial exploitation of our seas. Fishing alone does not make a practice Indigenous. What is Indigenous

is the kuleana to ensure abundance endures so that future generations may thrive. "Pono fishing" is not a slogan; it's at the core of our cultural practice.

Second, invoking "American waters" to justify extraction erases the deeper and ongoing realities of Indigenous relationships to these places. It reduces ancestral ocean spaces to political and economic boundaries while the council selectively invokes Indigeneity only when it serves their commercial interests. This contradiction reveals WESPAC's argument for what it is: opportunistic and unprincipled.

As the late Tongan-Fijian writer and anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa reminds us, "No people on earth are more suited to be guardians of the world's largest ocean than those for whom it has been home for generations."

Stewardship is not a burden imposed on us as Pacific peoples – it is a responsibility, privilege, and right carried forward with intention and pride. These protected places exist because our ancestors inherited an understanding of the ocean's significance from their ancestors and thus, acted to safeguard the ocean as the most valuable resource for us, their grandchildren.

To frame protection as a "burden" and exploitation as a "right" is to invert the very values that have sustained our Pacific ancestors and ecosystems for generations.

Though this was expected from the WESPAC vote, the outcome does not yet make commercial fishing legal.

There are still several steps and consultations that are lawfully required. We are continuing to organize and remain vigilant to ensure commercial fishing does not gain any legal ground, and that our oceans protected in perpetuity – for the benefit of our grandchildren. ■

Follow us on FB and IG @papahanaumokuakea.cwg and @papahanaumokuakea.coalition to stay updated and get involved.

# Ho'i i ka Piko

By Nāpualokelani Kamakele

*NaHHA is proud to share an article from one of our Lamakū Ho'okipa – Beacons of Hospitality – who exemplify the value of mālama and are making meaningful impact as contributing members of the Native Hawaiian community.*



Washington Commanders' training camp. My food truck became more than a kitchen, it was a classroom, a place to share culture and kuleana.

In 2025, I started making plans to come home. Today, just a few months into my return, I am still

adjusting to island life while leading a branch office for an independent elevator company.

As I have throughout my career, I continue to hold space for other wāhine, ensuring opportunities for growth and advancement, paying forward what was once shared with me.

To my Kānaka in the diaspora: e hana kou leo. Use your voice. Educate, perpetuate, and advocate. Never let your zip code define your identity.

To my Kānaka at home: e hana kō kākou leo. Let's create pathways and hold space for those seeking to come home. If you are in leadership, ask yourself how you can help "bring our people home" in sustainable ways. It must be more than a phrase; it's time to hana ka lima. ■

**I**n 1998, I left Hawai'i with my then husband, as a 21-year-old mother with an infant child, bound for a duty station in North Carolina. My story wasn't the typical "priced out of paradise" narrative, but over time, as the cost of living climbed, returning home felt increasingly impossible. Frankly, I didn't want to.

I built a career in Washington, D.C., navigating the "K Street Old Boys Network," yet remained rooted in my kuleana. I stayed connected through hula and service as a board member of the Hawaiian Civic Club and the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association East Coast Region. My three children were raised to be proud Kānaka, even thousands of miles from Hawai'i.

After a divorce in 2016 and a devastating house fire in 2021, I reached a turning point. I stepped away from the corporate world to pursue a life-long passion: sharing our culture through food. From years of feeding colleagues' full spreads of kalua pig, shoyu chicken, poke, and more, Pua's Plate Lunch was born.

The business grew through grassroots energy. Within three years, I built a loyal following, catering for Sen. Mazie Hirono's office and the

*Nāpualokelani Kamakele is a mother and community leader whose journey has spanned decades on the continent and recently returned her home to Hawai'i. Balancing her professional work with kuleana to 'ohana and community, she is strengthened by her commitment to serving others. As an entrepreneur and now general manager with Centric Elevator, she creates space for wāhine while championing pathways for kānaka to ho'i i ka piko.*



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# The 49th Annual 'Ō'ō Awards

## Kūkulu i ka Ho'oilina o Hawai'i

By Andrew Rosen

The evening begins not with words, but with presence.

As the chanters enter, their voices set the tone, grounded in 'ike, in kuleana, and in the 'ike of those who came before. One by one, the honorees are led forward and guided intentionally to their places among the community. It is a moment that reminds us: this is more than an event; this is a continuation of legacy.

The Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce's 49th Annual 'Ō'ō Awards embraces this year's theme: Kūkulu i ka Ho'oilina o Hawai'i: Building the Legacy of Hawai'i. That legacy lives through this year's honorees.

Samie Ku'uipo Kumukahi, a master of traditional Hawaiian mele, is honored as a guardian of culture whose voice carries generations of 'ike. Through her music and lifelong dedication, she ensures that our language, stories, and traditions continue to live and breathe.

Richard "Rick" Fernandez is recognized for building pathways of opportunity. His work has strengthened organizations, supported economic growth, and uplifted individuals and ohana, shaping a stronger future for our community.

Together, Brickwood Galuteria and Kimo Kahoano have helped define the



modern voice of Hawai'i. From their time on the *Aloha Morning Show* to decades of work across media, culture, and public service, they have connected people, amplified local voices, and shared Hawai'i with the world. Brickwood's leadership has bridged community and government, while Kimo's presence has carried aloha far beyond our shores.

Our Master of Ceremonies Kainoa Carlson will lead the evening with the vibrant energy of Pā'ahana, bringing music that reflects the rhythm and soul of our islands. This will be followed by the powerful expression of hula by Hālau Hula Ka Lehua Tuahine led by Kumu Hula Hiwa Vaughn, reminding us that culture is not something we preserve in the past, but something we live today.

Through ceremony, music, and storytelling, the annual 'Ō'ō Awards is a celebration of those who build, protect, and carry forward the legacy of Hawai'i. It is also a call for each of us to continue that work.

We invite the community to join us on October 16, 2026, from 5:30–9:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Waikīkī, as we honor these extraordinary individuals and celebrate the future they help create. ■

For more information, or to sponsor a table, visit [nativehawaiianchamberofcommerce.org](http://nativehawaiianchamberofcommerce.org).



This year's 'Ō'ō Award honorees will be (l-r): Brickwood Galuteria, Kimo Kahoano, Ku'uipo Kumukahi, and Rick Fernandez.

- Courtesy Photos

## Another 'Āhinahina

By Bobby Camara



Impossibly delicate, very finely divided lau are a hallmark of 'āhinahina. - Photo: David Eickhoff, flickr



Clusters of small flowers, pale yellow, nearly blend with lau. - Photo: iNaturalist

'Āhinahina or hinahina, is 'ōlelo Hawai'i for grey (or gray). Several plants fit that descriptor, and they dwell in a variety of locations, from sea level to mountain heights. This particular 'āhinahina (*Artemisia mauiensis*) is, if you noted its species name, indeed of Maui, 'āpa'akuma i luna Haleakalā.

On subalpine slopes (think 7,000 feet or so), fed by fogs and mists, Maui 'āhinahina ekes out a living, managing to survive where many plants can't. It's impossible to miss, given its silvery-white, extremely delicate foliage, contrasting with dark lava or cinder. Though pua are small and pale yellow, what a beauty this is!

The white or silver color is an

adaptation to very harsh sunlight. Thousands of minute hairs coat leaves, allowing the sun's rays to bounce and not burn. Ditto for 'āhinahina silversword, another denizen of the heights, as well as for coastal 'āhinahina kahakai, with tight rosettes of leaves favored for lei on Moloka'i.

Loveliness aside, it's said that lau 'āhinahina Maui were also used as insect repellent, thanks to a sage-like scent. Leaves were layered amongst stored ahu 'ula to make sure bugs stayed away.

Can you imagine a lei po'o of these lau? And lucky for us, it requires hardly any precious water. It's available in some plant nurseries, Go! Go buy and plant!! Help perpetuate our precious heritage!



Almost cloud-like, an *Artemisia* shrub on Haleakalā grows happily. - Photo: Forest and Kim Starr

# Tobacco Prevention Toolkit Focused on Future Generations

By Melyssa Kawehi Moderow, MPH

*'Eu ke kanaka i kona hanu ~ One stirs because of the breath within.*

The adage above tells us that, with the proper tools and encouragement, one can breathe with strength and vitality. With the release of a new Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, we hope to stir into action a movement that reduces tobacco and nicotine use among Native Hawaiians.

Recent research has shown that tobacco and nicotine use remain high, impacting the health of our 'ohana. Concerns from our lāhui about how tobacco use affects our hā, our breath, and our ability to live long and healthy lives for our 'ohana, has been corroborated with data.

These voices remind us of the importance of providing culturally grounded information and resources to support healthier choices for ourselves and our 'ohana, benefitting the lives of our keiki.

Thus, Papa Ola Lōkahi has collaborated with many community partners to develop a Tobacco Prevention Toolkit to serve as a one-stop collection of culturally relevant resources to support prevention, reduction, and cessation of tobacco and nicotine use.

It is intended for community members, 'ohana, service providers, and organizations looking for practical tools, education, and support that reflect our values and lived experiences. By grounding this resource in community voices and 'ike Hawai'i, families and individuals may be empowered to make informed decisions about their health and to protect their hā.

Native Hawaiian (12.8%) and Pacific Islander (9.5%) adults experience disproportionate rates of cigarette use compared to the overall Hawai'i population (8%) according to Hawai'i Health Matters (HHM, 2024). These disparities are even more concerning among our 'ōpio.

In recent years, cigarette and vape use has increased among young people, with Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) 'ōpio vaping at significantly higher rates than the overall Hawai'i population: Native Hawaiians: 17%; Pacific Islanders: 27%; Overall: 13% (HHM, 2023).



These trends highlight the urgent need for early, culturally responsive education and prevention efforts that center on the values of our lāhui. It is also important to take exception to the tobacco industry's role in shaping these dismal outcomes.

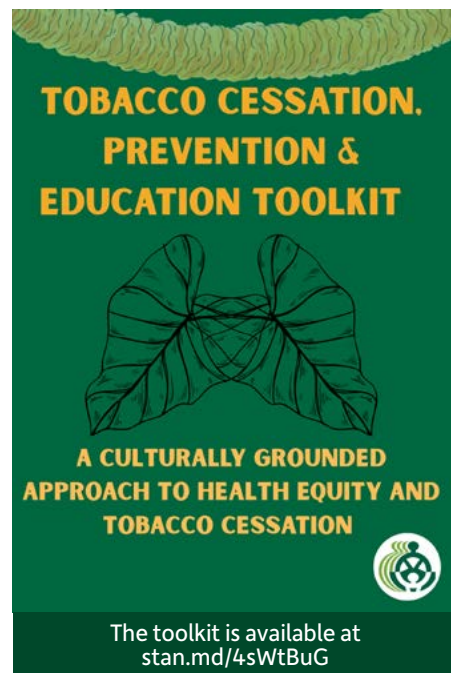
Big tobacco has long targeted communities of color. Historically, tobacco companies have appropriated Native Hawaiian culture in advertising, portraying images of long-haired women wearing cigarette lei while dancing hula.

Today, targeting continues by flavoring tobacco and vape products to reflect familiar branding, such as "Hawaiian Sun Juice" and "Aloha Sun Vapes."

The tobacco industry has even described Asian and Pacific Islander populations as a "potential gold mine ... predisposed" to addiction via tobacco products, reinforcing how profit has been prioritized over people's health.

Kū'e! The Tobacco Prevention Toolkit is one way we can reclaim our own narratives, strengthen our knowledge, and support one another through our maui ola journeys. Together, we can uplift our 'ohana and create a healthier future for generations to come.

Protect your hā. ■



# Uncounted, Unheard Diaspora Kānaka and Military Leases

By Noelani Mengel

What is the kuleana of Kānaka living outside of Kō Hawai'i Pae 'Āina when it comes to having a voice at the table in discussions about military leases? This article reflects ongoing conversations and the need to expand them.

For some, the answer is straightforward: if you leave the islands, or are born away from them, your voice in Hawai'i is diminished. A Hawai'i state-issued ID becomes a proxy for belonging – and, by extension, legitimacy.

Within our work, we recognize that perspective but also understand it as a response shaped by scarcity. As a lāhui, our responsibility is to move toward an abundance framework – one that recognizes the breadth of our people, regardless of where they reside.

The Ecosystems and Environment Committee of Nā Lei Makalapua, the Mainland Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, engages in a range of federal and state processes that impact Native Hawaiian resources and rights.

This includes participation in Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) reviews, military lease discussions, and broader national consultations with agencies such as the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The committee is also registered with the Federal Register to monitor and respond to rulemaking and notices that affect Hawai'i and its beneficiaries, reflecting a sustained commitment to advocacy at multiple levels.

This work requires grounding in the historical and legal framework of Hawaiian crown lands, whose boundaries were shaped during the 1898 annexation, and their alignment with the Hawai'i State Constitution. The constitution embeds the public trust doctrine and affirms Native Hawaiian rights, establishing a trust relationship that is status-based, not location-based.



Except for the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, a Native Hawaiian is generally understood as any descendant of the aboriginal people of Hawai'i prior to 1778. This definition does not diminish with geography.

Accordingly, the question is not whether diaspora Kānaka are beneficiaries, but how their interests are recognized in decision-making processes.

Reviews of environmental impact statement (EIS) documents, including the Haleakalā Air Tour Management Plan EIS and the Pōhakuloa EIS, indicate that standard National Environmental Policy Act procedures structure participation through impact identification and public comment tracking, often organized by geography or general identity categories.

In practice, this results in diaspora Kānaka being categorized as either "Native Hawaiian" or "out-of-state," – but not both – within a unified framework.

This reveals a gap in how the full beneficiary class is identified and considered. Current processes do not fully account for diaspora Kānaka as part of the trust relationship, resulting in incomplete engagement with those who hold recognized rights and interests in these lands.

The State of Hawai'i carries an obligation to manage trust lands for the benefit of all beneficiaries. That obligation cannot be met without processes that accurately identify and meaningfully engage the full beneficiary class.

At stake is not simply process, but principle – and the state's responsibility to uphold its constitutional trust obligations.

The absence of diaspora voices is not incidental; it is a structural deficiency that must be addressed to ensure that all beneficiaries are counted, and all are heard. ■

Noelani Mengel is Ecosystems and Environment Committee chair for Nā Lei Makalapua, Mainland Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs.

## Kū i ke 'Aki

By Lisa Kapono Mason



Kū i ke 'aki, lulu i ke kaupoku. Hakalau sky. - Photo: Kaycia Mercado Simmons

On the eastern slope of Maunakea, within the ahupua'a of Hakalau nui and near the corridor of Kanakaleonui, lies the Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge. Known as the place of "many perches," Hakalau shelters some of Hawai'i Island's rarest endemic forest birds. Here, critically endangered species like the 'Alawī, 'Ākepa, and 'Akiapōlā'au persist in some of their strongest remaining populations.

In the early mornings, birdsong fills this heavenly forest with pulses of vitality, accompanied by deeper echoes of mourning for what is vanishing elsewhere across our islands. As the decline of Hawai'i's native honeycreepers accelerates, we must ask: could species like the 'Aki-kiki, 'Akeke'e, and 'Anianiau of Kaua'i, or the Kiwīkiu and 'Ākohekohe of Maui one day also find refuge here?

Standing beneath the expansive canopies of 'ōhi'a and koa, a question arises in response: why not?

Translocation is a bold and necessary tool in a changing world. Yet resistance to moving species between islands remains.

Even here, lower elevations face growing threats from avian malaria and ecological instability. Still, Hakalau represents possibility, supporting the most robust community of native honeycreepers in all of Hawai'i.

We must not limit these precious birds' chances for survival, embrace hope, and re-ground ourselves with the strength that Hakalau offers.

Our precious manu are calling out to remind us of the power of place that is the essence of who we are as Hawai'i. ■

## I ka 'Ōlelo nō ke Ola, I ka 'Ōlelo nō ka Make

### Words can heal, they can also destroy

By Mālia Sanders

I recently watched the series *Sandokan* and was drawn in by the richness of its storytelling ... the landscapes, characters and language, but at the end of each episode, when a barely readable disclaimer briefly appears, I found myself pausing.

"The characters and symbolism used are fictional and not intended to represent or replicate the sacred tribal practices of any specific Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge and respect the cultural, spiritual, social, and historical significance of such symbolism and the communities to which it belongs."

At first this seems responsible; but within lies a contradiction. It claims fiction, while acknowledging that its inspiration is real - the places, the languages, the struggle. And the symbolism, while altered, is unmistakably familiar - particularly for those grounded in Indigenous cultural knowledge systems.

From my perspective, informed by Pacific cultures, these elements feel close to something lived. For many viewers, that distinction shapes understanding. It informs what is believed to be authentic. And that is where the disclaimer falls short.

It appears quietly after the story has already done its work. It does not interrupt the narrative; it happens afterwards, functioning as a shield - acknowledging significance while distancing legal or cultural responsibility.

This reflects a deeper issue: how intellectual property is understood ... Western intellectual property versus Indigenous cultural intellectual property.

In capitalist systems, intellectual property is individual and can be owned, transformed, monetized. Cultural intellectual property is different. It is collective and tied to genealogy, place, and 'ike. It carries kuleana. It is not available without relationship or consent.

Disclaimers satisfy legal requirements, but not cultural ones.

Projects like *Chief of War* show what storytelling looks like when Indigenous voices lead. From its first frame that is clarified: "Based on True Events." Written and directed by Native Hawaiians, with cultural experts guiding language, arts, and traditional knowledge, it places Native Hawaiians not just in front of the camera, but at the center of the creative process.

Unlike productions that cast non-white actors disconnected from the culture or place, *Chief of War* is grounded in the people, places, and expertise of the community it portrays. This is powerful and it proves that storytelling can move beyond cultural extraction toward genuine relationship, responsibility, and accountability.

The question is not whether one project gets it right, but whether the film industry is willing to embrace this as a standard, not an exception.

For Indigenous communities, this is the challenge. If

we only resist, we risk being left out of these storytelling spaces. But if we engage on our terms, we can reshape them and move from being referenced to being recognized, from being consulted to being trusted, from being a story's subjects to its authors.

Pono storytelling is not just about avoiding harm, it is about restoring balance. It is about ensuring that our 'ike is presented with integrity. It is about honoring kuleana to our ancestors, communities, and the generations who will inherit these stories, now and in the future.

The stories we tell matter. The way we tell them also defines what is real and what is fake and what endures generations into the future. ■

Mālia Sanders is the executive director of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association.

## Questioning the Application of NAGPRA

By Bobby Camara

During a meeting of the OHA Board of Trustees on March 18, 2026, there was a discussion about repatriations. Several statements caused me to be confused and somewhat alarmed. I urge the Board to examine NAGPRA and learn.

Current events concerning the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), repatriations, legal definitions, and processes, prompt this communication. Originally intended, I believe, to be a vehicle for the repatriation of iwi kūpuna taken from Hawai'i for various purposes by various means, it has now become something different.

As we know, Hui Mālama i nā Kūpuna o Hawai'i Nei deserves credit and aloha for their passion and successes in the repatriation of many iwi kūpuna. That organization was officially dissolved on December 20, 2014. Its successor, Hui Iwi Kuamo'o (HIK), one of 190 Native Hawaiian Organizations listed with the Department of Interior Office of Native Hawaiian Relations (ONHR), has been very active in recent repatriations, though mostly with secrecy.

With the passage of an "updated" 2024 version of NAGPRA, it seems that the focus of HIK has shifted to repatriating everything with origins in Native Hawaiian cultural practices held in museums and other institutions in America. Definitions were changed, supplemented, and/or added to accomplish their apparent goal. This includes asserting that seemingly everything can be sacred and needed for religious ritual:

**2024: Sacred object** means a specific ceremonial object needed by a traditional religious leader for present-day adherents to practice traditional Native American religion, according to the Native American traditional knowledge of a lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization. While many items might be imbued with sacredness in a culture, this term is specifically limited to an object needed for the observance or

## HA'I MANA'O

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renewal of a Native American religious ceremony.

And that the Native Hawaiian people have a singular united voice:

**2024: (2)** A people comprise the entire body of persons who constitute a community, Tribe, Nation, or other group by virtue of a common culture, history, religion, language, race, ethnicity, or similar feature. The Native Hawaiian Community is a “people.”

Adding “a people” to define Native Hawaiians is problematic. To many of us, there is no singular “Native Hawaiian Community.” Rather, there are a plethora of communities, depending on lineage, residence, political views, age, etc.

And, unlike previously, when claimants needed to be unanimous on the details of repatriation, now the restoring institution must choose the best, most suitable claimant to whom objects must be repatriated. When there are competing claims, I am concerned that an institution outside Hawai'i might be challenged to decide the authority of various claimants.

**2024: (e)** Competing claims or requests. A museum, Federal agency, or DHHL must determine the Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization with the closest cultural affiliation.

Hundreds of thousands of Native Hawaiians live outside Hawai'i. Wouldn't it be a good thing for them to be able to go to nearby institutions and visit objects of their heritage to be able to appreciate and learn from them? ■

*Bobby Camara was born and raised in Honoka'a and has lived in Volcano for more than 40 years. He recently retired from Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.*

*For more information about NAGPRA go to: [ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-10](https://ecfr.gov/current/title-43/subtitle-A/part-10)*

## The Illusion of Strength Why more military spending may be making America less secure

By Van Abbott

America once built dreams; now it builds weapons and calls it security.

Over the past five years, the United States has increased defense and related security spending from roughly \$700 billion to nearly \$1 trillion annually. Projections suggest total outlays could approach \$1.5 trillion by 2027. These figures are so vast they no longer shock.

Yet the central question remains largely unasked in Washington: Why?

Are the threats facing the nation truly so great as to justify ever-expanding commitments? Or has the country come to equate security with spending while overlooking the costs elsewhere?

Every bomber produced, every missile tested, carries a tradeoff: a school not built, research deferred, a patient

left without care, a community left behind.

During the Cold War, policymakers spoke of peace through strength - but strength was paired with restraint. Today, it risks becoming an end unto itself.

Instead of prioritizing medical breakthroughs or energy innovation, the nation channels its intellectual capital into refining weapons systems. Each additional trillion directed toward defense reduces the capacity to invest in long-term economic vitality.

The consequences extend beyond budgets. Policies that restrict skilled immigration and limit educational visas discourage global talent from choosing American institutions. In the name of security, the nation risks weakening one of its greatest sources of strength: openness to ideas.

Proponents argue that defense spending supports jobs and economic activity. In a narrow sense, this is true. But much of that activity is tied to weapons production rather than broadly shared prosperity.

Communities need investment in education, health-care, and infrastructure, not dependence on military contracts.

An economy oriented around conflict cannot deliver durable growth. Redirect even a fraction of current military spending toward clean energy, transportation, or disease prevention, and the benefits would multiply across generations.

This concern is not new. President Dwight Eisenhower warned that a growing military-industrial structure could distort national priorities. That structure has since expanded into a network of contractors, lobbyists, and political incentives. Budget decisions now reflect not only strategic necessity but also institutional momentum.

At the same time, the assumption that greater military spending guarantees greater security is rarely examined. Many of the nation's most pressing challenges are domestic: aging infrastructure, rising costs of living, uneven education, and widening inequality. Military power cannot repair bridges, reduce household strain, or improve public health.

America's global leadership was built not only on military capability but on innovation, openness, and cooperation. An overreliance on military dominance risks eroding those advantages. By prioritizing military strength over internal renewal, the nation weakens the foundation it seeks to defend.

The United States now faces a defining choice. It can continue expanding the machinery of war, or it can invest in the conditions that make strength possible: education, research, infrastructure, and public health.

Strength is not measured by the size of arsenals. It is measured by the vitality of a society and the opportunities it creates. ■

*Van Abbott is a retired financial manager who served as a teacher in the Peace Corps. He resides in Alaska.*

## Carrying Kuleana in Astronomy Spaces

By Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco and Kara Dumaguin

As Kānaka working in community-facing roles within astronomy spaces in Hawai'i, we often find ourselves carrying more than just our professional roles. We carry 'ike, identity, and a deep sense of kuleana to the places and communities that shape us. That kuleana does not stay outside of our work. It moves with us into every space we enter.

Recently, we engaged in community meetings across the pae 'āina through the Mauna Kea Stewardship and Oversight Authority. We listened to voices from different islands, each sharing memories, 'ike, and pilina with Maunakea. What stood out was not only the diversity of perspectives, but the consistency of relationship. There was a shared understanding that this work does not exist in isolation, but within a broader landscape of relationships, histories, and ongoing conversations around stewardship and responsibility.

The mana of those spaces stayed with us.

They reminded us that our presence in astronomy is not separate from who we are as Kānaka. Long before telescopes, our kūpuna observed the skies, navigating vast oceans and understanding their movements through relationship and practice. Observation was never only technical, but relational, grounded in 'ike and in an awareness of place that extends beyond what is measurable.

That understanding continues to shape how we move through these spaces.

Kuleana is often spoken about as responsibility, but for us, it is not something that turns on or off depending on where we are. It is present in how we listen, how we engage, and how we decide what we are willing to accept or remain silent about.

At times, this work feels like kōnane. Each move is deliberate. Each choice shapes what becomes possible next. Not every move is visible, and not every move leads to immediate change, but over time, the board shifts. Relationships shift. The environment itself begins to respond.

There are moments when that kuleana feels clear, grounded in relationship and in the ways we hold space with intention. But there are also moments where it feels heavier, where it sits in tension with the structures around us. In those moments, there is no simple resolution. There is only the work of deciding how we continue to show up.

We carry kuleana to our communities, who continue to share their 'ike and mana'o about the future of Maunakea. We carry kuleana to our kūpuna, whose knowledge systems remind us that observation is rooted in relationship, not only technique.

We also carry kuleana within the institutions we are part of. Part of that responsibility is helping these spaces become more grounded, more aware, and more accountable in their relationship to place.

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The road up the mountain is never just a road.

Each time we make that drive, we are reminded that we are not arriving as only one thing. We arrive carrying everything that has shaped us, everything that we are accountable to, and everything that we are still learning how to hold. ■

*Kenika Lorenzo-Elarco works in astronomy at the W. M. Keck Observatory, and Kara Dumaguin works in community relations at the Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope.*

## Another Attack on Hawaiians

By Kaeo Yuen

On March 30, 2026, the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (NHHSP) was sued for discrimination because applicants must demonstrate Native Hawaiian ancestry. The plaintiff, an American organization, Do No Harm, claims to be “dedicated to protecting healthcare from radical, divisive, and discriminatory ideologies and policies.” This ornate characterization ignores the context in which NHHSP was founded and the role it plays in Hawai'i.

In October 1988, Congress enacted the Native Hawaiian Health Care Act (Public Law 100-579) to “improve the health status of Native Hawaiians.” This was in response to findings that Native Hawaiians faced significantly poorer health outcomes than the general population, alongside persistent barriers to accessing care.

From this Act emerged a Native Hawaiian health system, including NHHSP as a workforce pathway to address provider shortages, with nonprofit Papa Ola Lōkahi as the coordinating body. The purpose was to increase the number of Native Hawaiian healthcare professionals and ensure underserved communities across Hawai'i have access to care.

Since 1991, the program has awarded more than 330 scholarships to Native Hawaiians across more than 20 health and allied health professions, including medicine, nursing, psychology, and social work. In return, recipients commit to serving full-time in medically underserved communities across Hawai'i for two to four years. Scholars receive support for tuition and a stipend while completing their training.

The lawsuit reduces this entire system to a single claim that the program “facially excludes all races other than ‘Native Hawaiian’” and therefore constitutes discrimination. It argues that eligibility is determined by being the “right” race and that excluding non-native applicants is inherently unjust.

But this framing distorts the program's purpose. NHHSP was never intended to function as a general scholarship open to anyone who wishes to work in Hawai'i, but rather as an intentional workforce pipeline created to address specific and ongoing disparities facing Native Hawaiians and the communities where those disparities are most severe.

The lawsuit further dismisses the importance of culturally informed care, asserting that research “does not support” the idea that patients benefit from having doctors of the same race. Yet in making this claim, it relies on a report produced by the same organization bringing the lawsuit.

This circular, self-supported argument assumes NHHSP

was built on a theory of racial matching - reducing a complex healthcare reality to a single convenient conclusion.

In reality, the program is built on the need to recruit and train healthcare providers in communities that have long faced health challenges, where trust, communication, and cultural understanding shape whether patients even seek and accept care.

Native Hawaiian physicians remain underrepresented, and programs like NHHSP exist to address that gap. This lawsuit reflects a broader effort to recast targeted programs as discrimination while ignoring the conditions that made them necessary in the first place.

If efforts like this succeed, alongside the ongoing lawsuit against Kamehameha Schools, they will not stop at a single scholarship program. Organizations like Do No Harm, with a seemingly noble mission, will continue to dismantle systems meant to restore the health of, and rehabilitate, Native Hawaiian people. ■

*Kaeo Yuen is a 2024 graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. He is currently a sophomore at Harvard and a teacher assistant at Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pū'ōhala in Kāne'ōhe.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Better Support Needed for Veterans' Survivors in Hawai'i

For generations, Hawai'i has stood at the center of the U.S. defense operations in the Pacific, a role reflected in nearly 90,000 veterans who now call the islands home. Yet unknown to many, this legacy masks a harsher reality: drastic repercussions stemming from service-related toxic exposures.

Such an issue has, in fact, been evident in installations like Pearl Harbor Naval Complex, which documented severe contamination due to asbestos and other hazardous chemicals.

Consequently, as exposed individuals eventually battle debilitating illnesses, spouses and parents become primary caregivers - cutting back work hours while facing rising medical and household expenses. Worse, such burdens frequently persist and even intensify after a veteran's passing.

Recognizing this crisis, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) was thereby implemented to extend a monthly payment of \$1,699.36 - subject to conditions. However, even this vital program cannot capture the full economic toll left behind. If recognition is to be meaningful, survivor benefits must better reflect the long-term necessities of veterans' dependents.

**Cristina Johnson**

*Cristina Johnson is an advocate at the Asbestos Ships Organization, a nonprofit that raises awareness of veterans' exposure to toxic substances. For more info go to: asbestos-ships.com.*

## Kamāwaelualani and UIHI Collaborate on Survey

UIHI wants to hear from you!

Help us understand how head injuries affect Indigenous survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault by taking part in our national survey.



Urban Indian Health Institute



Kamāwaelualani Corp and the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) are collaborating on a survey to better understand how traumatic brain injury (TBI) impacts American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or both. The information gathered will help improve culturally relevant services, prevention efforts, policy, and healing support for Indigenous communities. Kamāwaelualani is a Kaua'i-based nonprofit that stewards Missing Murdered Native Hawaiian Women, Girls and Māhū research and education efforts here in Hawai'i. UIHI is a nonprofit committed to decolonizing data for Indigenous people by Indigenous people. The survey, which takes about 15 minutes to complete, begins with a vetting process to ensure that survey questions are being answered by actual human beings (not bots) who meet the requirements to take the survey. Individuals who complete the survey will be offered a gift card. To complete the survey, scan QR code or go to [uihi.org](http://uihi.org).

## Conservation Grants for Maui Nui

The Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) approved recommendations in March from the state Legacy Land Conservation (LLC) Commission and the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) to award up to \$7 million in state grants for five conservation projects across Maui and Moloka'i.

LLC grants provide state funding for land acquisition, supporting the preservation and

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protection of pristine coastal areas, culturally significant shorelines, native forest habitat and lands that support traditional practices and community access. The five projects, and their respective grantees, are:

**Honolua Bay (Save Honolua Coalition):** A 17.8-acre collection of parcels, both coastal and ma uka, in Lahaina, Maui. The area supports critical habitat, cultural sites and public use. Protection will enable coordinated access management, natural resource restoration, and cultural preservation.

**Mālama Kaunakakai (Hui Wa'a o Moloka'i):** About 23 acres on Moloka'i's south shore including wetlands, native waterbird habitat, and a traditional canoe landing area. The project will protect open space and establish a permanent base for Moloka'i's voyaging community.

**Kaloko'eli Shoreline (Ka Honua Momona International):** A 7.2-acre stretch of shoreline parcels on Moloka'i adjacent to Kaloko'eli Fishpond. The area forms a cultural and ecological corridor supporting traditional aquaculture, shoreline habitat and community-based stewardship.

**East Maui Coastal Forest (DLNR**

**DoFAW):** More than 540 acres along Maui's Hāna Highway. This mixed native forest provides habitat for endangered plants, native seabirds and the Hawaiian hoary bat, and protects streams and nearshore ecosystems. The acquisition will maintain critical watershed functions.

**Haneo'o 'Āina (Ke Ao Hali'i):** About 115 acres in Hāna, Maui, including areas with significant cultural and historical significance, including burial sites and other wahi pana. The project will help preserve Hāna's rural character, protect cultural landscapes, and support stewardship and education.

The legislature established the LLC grant fund in 2005 to provide permanent, dedicated funding for land conservation through a portion of the real estate conveyance tax. Since then, the program has helped protect 37,000 acres statewide.

### Hawaiian Scholarship Program Challenged

Last month, *Bloomberg Law* reported that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) scholarship for Native Hawaiians has been hit with a federal lawsuit by "Do No Harm," a Virginia-based group that fights affirmative action efforts in health care and medi-



Thanks to a conservation grant, 540 acres of mixed forest land along Maui's Hāna Highway will be protected in perpetuity. - Photo Courtesy of DLNR

## Supporting Flood Recovery in Waialua



In early April, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hawaiian Council joined forces to open up a Kona Low Flood Recovery Center based at the Waialua Courthouse on O'ahu's North Shore to serve as a one-stop hub for recovery services. As part of this effort, OHA trustees approved the activation of disaster funds distributed through OHA's I Ola Program and administered by Hawaiian Council. A brief protocol was offered by leaders from both organizations prior to opening the recovery center. Here, Hialeimoana Wong-Kalu of Hawaiian Council (holding lei) offers an oli. Standing with her are (l-r): OHA Sr. Director of Hawaiian Cultural Affairs Hailama Farden, OHA Trustee and Vice Chair Keoni Souza, and OHA Chief Operating Officer K.Sean Kekina. - Photo: Micah Kahiwa

cal education.

Do No Harm claims that the HHS Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program violates both the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fifth Amendment. The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The organization, comprised of conservative-leaning medical professionals and "concerned citizens," was formed in 2022 by Dr. Stanley Goldfarb to "expose and advocate against the invasion of identity politics in healthcare" and to "ensure that harmful ideologies are not degrading the quality of medical education" according to its website.

Claiming they are fighting to protect health care, Do No Harm exists to "counteract divisive trends in medicine, such as 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' and youth focused gender ideology."

The challenge directly impacts funding for nonprofit Papa Ola

Lōkahi (POL), founded in 1988 to improve the comprehensive health and wellbeing of Native Hawaiians. Responding to the challenge, POL CEO Dr. Sheri Daniels said, "Efforts to dismantle programs like this ignore both the historical context and the ongoing need to safeguard equitable access to care throughout Hawai'i."

The group's board includes conservative affirmative action opponent Edward Blum whose organization, "Students for Fair Admission" filed the lawsuit challenging Kamehameha Schools' Hawaiian preference admissions policy last August.

### FEMA Assistance After Kona Low Storms

Federal disaster assistance is now available to help individuals and households recover from the impacts of the Kona Low storms and subsequent flooding that occurred March 10-24. Via

a Major Disaster Declaration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is authorized to extend its individual assistance program to residents of Hawai'i, Maui and Honolulu counties.

Those with homeowners or renters' insurance should file claims as soon as possible, as FEMA cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance. FEMA can assist with damages not covered by insurance.

In addition, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) low-interest disaster loans are also available for businesses of any size and nonprofits. Like FEMA, SBA cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance.

To apply for FEMA assistance, go to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov) or call their toll-free hotline at 1-800-621-3362. To apply for an SBA low-interest disaster loan go to [sba.gov/disaster](https://sba.gov/disaster). For assistance call 1-800-659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

The deadline to apply for FEMA and SBA disaster assistance is June 14, 2026.

### 17 Tūtū and Me Sites to Close

Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF) has announced that 17 of its Tūtū and Me sites will be closed at the end of August after it lost \$15 million in federal funding due to the assault on DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) programs by the Trump administration.

Across the board federal funding cuts for Native Hawaiian programs has hit hard, affecting everything from education to health to housing. Tūtū and Me currently has 24 sites across five islands. Hardest hit will be 'ohana in remote, rural communities.

Tūtū and Me Traveling Preschool is an internationally recognized,

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## NEWS BRIEFS

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high-quality early childhood education program dedicated to supporting the critical early years of childhood development using Hawaiian culture-based curriculum and instruction. Since it began in 2001, the program has served tens of thousands of keiki and their caregivers throughout the pae ʻāina.

Hawaiʻi already has a severe shortage of early childhood education providers and facilities, especially for keiki ages 0-2. The extreme downsizing of Tūtū and Me due to funding leaves a glaring gap in services, especially to ʻohana in neighbor island communities.

Kamakau Haumāna  
Travel to NYC

Ten middle school haumāna from Ke Kula ʻo Samuel M. Kamakau Laboratory Public Charter School (Kamakau) in Heʻeia, Oʻahu, recently traveled to New York City (NYC) to participate in the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) conference March 11-14, 2026.

This is the third year that Kamakau has participated in the conference – the only Hawaiʻi middle school to do so. MMUN is a multi-day global education experience designed to nurture the next generation of leaders through peace education. The program helps students develop empathy, critical thinking, negotiation and leadership skills.

This year, for the first time, MMUN hosted the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as part of their conference, representing the perspectives and positions of 16 different Indigenous People groups from around the world.

As part of this learning experience, the Kamakau students had the opportunity to “represent”



(L-R) Kaleihiwa DeMello, Kawaiolu Hottendorf, Kaleo Peebles, Puamana Kanoa-Wong, Kahawai Yee, Poetua Wassman, Koʻiawe Jones, Makona Gaspar-Kekumu, Kaulupona Hottendorf and Kahiahonui Simeona proudly display the hae Hawaiʻi in New York City. - Photo: Courtesy of SM Kamakau LPCS

the following Indigenous People groups: The Wiradjuri (Australia); the Māori (Aotearoa); the Sami (Russian Federation); the Cree (Canada) and the Greenlandic Inuit. MMUN topics follow the UN agenda, focusing on real-world global issues like sustainable development, human rights, peace security, and international law.

This year, students were assigned to study one of two topics: 1) Financing the future: the financial needs of Indigenous Peoples to support their actions for biodiversity, climate and the protection of Mother Earth and; 2) Guiding principles for the implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights to autonomy and self-government.

Kamakau's MMUN program leads are Coordinator Kuʻulei Akaka and Kumu Kaipoʻi Kelling. The students are grounded in a Hawaiian worldview and from this foundation they build on ʻike kūpuna such as mālama ʻāina and mālama lāhui to deepen their understanding of the perspectives of the Indigenous Peoples they were assigned to represent.

“Hawaiʻi's independence was recognized by England and France on Nov. 23, 1843, via the Anglo-Franco Proclamation which affirmed Hawaiʻi as an independent nation among other civilized nations. Hawaiʻi was the first non-European nation

recognized,” noted Kelling. “Diplomacy is a legacy rooted in our moʻolelo and now we have a road to follow and to pave at the same time. Timoteo Haʻalilio, who led the delegation to Europe, spent a good amount of time in New York City and to have our haumāna in the same space is surreal.”

Normalizing ʻŌlelo  
Hawaiʻi at HoMA

In February, the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) marked Mahina ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi by creating its first-ever publication in ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi to accompany a featured exhibition.

“We wanted to celebrate Mahina ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi at the same time we were mounting Toshiko Takaazu: Worlds Within and brainstorming ways we could enhance the exhibition experience,” said Lesa Griffith, HoMA senior PR and communications manager. “The artist's close connection to ʻāina and the influence the Hawaiian landscape has on her work made the show the ideal focus for a self-guided tour in ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, with multiple layers of connection and meaning.”

The exhibition, which runs through July 26, highlights the work of the late Toshiko Takaazu, an internationally recognized artist born in Pepeʻekea

and raised on Maui. Known for reimagining the ceramic vessel as a form of artistic expression, she approached her sculptures as three-dimensional abstract paintings, using clay as her canvas. Takaazu was an instructor at Princeton University from 1967 to 1992.

“Visitors to the show have said they appreciate the brochure and the way it added meaning and connection for them,” said Griffith.

As HoMA approaches its centennial in 2027, visitors can expect more initiatives that bring a Hawaiian perspective to the interpretation of the museum's collection, exhibitions, and programs.

Cazimero to Receive  
Honorary Doctorate

Kumu Hula Robert Cazimero.  
- Courtesy Photo

Renowned musician and Kumu Hula Robert Cazimero will be awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the University of Hawaiʻi during Leeward Community College's fall convocation.

The UH Board of Regents approved the honor at its April 16 meeting.

Cazimero is known for his leadership of Hālau Nā Kamailei o Līlīehua, his influence on generations of haumāna, and his celebrated career in Hawaiian music. His work has helped strengthen the continuity and global reach of Hawaiian cultural traditions.

Throughout his career, he has been a steadfast partner to UH, supporting its mission to nurture knowledge, improve cul-

tural identity and inspire future generations. Across UH's 10 campuses, he has shared his time and expertise through guest lectures, workshops, performances and mentorship. Cazimero's engagement in cultural learning and mentorship has helped deepen students' experiences with ʻike Hawaiʻi.

The honorary doctorate recognizes individuals of national or international distinction whose contributions have had a significant impact in areas such as business, public service or scholarship.

## Got a Minute for Mele?

Kāhuli Leo Leʻa, a nonprofit that aims to accelerate aloha ʻāina through the education, composition and presentation of mele and other cultural practices, has recently introduced a new social media series, Mele Minute.

Designed to use mele as a teaching tool using social media, over the next few months, Mele Minute will promote the educational value of mele through 1-minute social media “challenges” incentivized with prizes.

The idea is to spend 1 minute a day to test your knowledge of Hawaiian mele. Each post will present the lyrics to a mele (in both Hawaiian and English), pose a series of questions about the mele (e.g., places mentioned in the mele), and then share additional moʻolelo about the wahi pana or history represented in the mele. The final slide asks a special question.

People who take the time to answer have a chance to win a prize. The first Mele Minute post dropped in mid-April and the prize was a pair of tickets to Hawaiian Airlines' May Day concert.

To participate, check out @kahulileolea on IG or search #meleminute. ■

## HEPA Still Matters at Haleakalā

High above Maui, on the summit of Haleakalā, a new proposal is raising serious questions about process, transparency, and the state's kuleana to its people.

The Department of the Air Force has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed AMOS STAR facility – up to seven telescope domes on Pu'u Kolekole, within a landscape recognized as a Traditional Cultural Property of deep significance to Native Hawaiians.

The DEIS acknowledges “significant and adverse effects” on this cultural landscape. That alone should demand scrutiny. But equally concerning is the Air Force's decision to step away from Hawai'i's environmental review law, the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act (HEPA), midway through the process.

This is not a technical issue. It goes to whether the people of Hawai'i – especially beneficiaries of the public land trust – will have a meaningful voice in decisions that permanently alter our lands.

At the center is a simple fact: the land is owned by the State of Hawai'i. The parcel remains part of the public land trust (PLT) and has never been transferred to the federal government.

Federal use stems from Executive Order 1808, issued in 1957, which set aside the land for federal purposes. But a set-aside is not ownership. It is a revocable administrative designation. The state retains title. The people retain their interest.

That distinction matters.

HEPA is not a permitting law, it is a disclosure law. It ensures that environmental and cultural impacts are fully disclosed before actions are taken on state lands. Under Hawai'i law, use of state land triggers that requirement.

The Air Force's argument for exiting HEPA relies on the 1957 set-aside. But that reasoning is flawed. A territorial-era



**Kaiali'i  
Kahele**

CHAIR  
Trustee,  
Hawai'i Island

executive order cannot override a state law enacted after statehood. Nor does a set-aside erase the state's ownership or responsibility to ensure transparency.

Equally troubling is an inconsistency in the DEIS. In one section, the land is identified as state-owned. In another, it is described as “Federal land – FAA.” It cannot be both. This raises concerns about whether the project is being characterized differently depending on which regulatory framework is being invoked.

There are also procedural questions. The Air Force entered HEPA review in April 2024, then later concluded – on its own – that HEPA no longer applies after redesigning part of the project. There is no clear indication that the Department of Land and Natural Resources nor Hawai'i's Environmental Review Program concurred with that determination, or that a formal withdrawal process was properly completed under state rules.

For the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, this is not abstract. These lands are part of the public land trust, held for the benefit of Native Hawaiians. Our responsibility is to ensure those trust interests are protected and that the state fulfills its fiduciary obligations with integrity.

That means asking: Does state ownership trigger HEPA, regardless of federal use? Was the withdrawal valid? Does the absence of a finalized land agreement between the FAA and Air Force preserve a state approval role? What material benefit is the state getting from allowing the Air Force to use this land? And what are the implications of inconsistent claims about ownership?

These are fundamental questions about governance and trust.

When public trust lands are at stake – especially at Haleakalā – the people of Hawai'i deserve full transparency before decisions are made. ■

## Part II: Serving the Lāhui – a Deep Kuleana

Last month, I reflected on the kūpuna who shaped my understanding of service and kuleana. Their lessons continue to guide the work ahead of us. Mahalo e nā kūpuna.

While our values come from our kūpuna, the responsibility before us is clear. My focus has been on strengthening systems that will continue to serve our people long after any one trustee's time has ended. As chair of the Investment and Land Management (ILM) Committee, I worked alongside fellow trustees and staff to advance and adopt key policies that guide how the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) stewards its resources.

This included implementing a Real Estate Strategic Plan to guide OHA's management and activation of its landholdings in a way that balances revenue generation with cultural and community priorities.

We also advanced the OHA Investment Policy for Legacy Lands, established OHA Management Policies for Investment Lands and Legacy Lands, and refined the Native Hawaiian Trust Fund Spend Policy to promote a more sustainable and responsible approach to resource management, ensuring we can meet the needs of today's beneficiaries while safeguarding resources for future generations. We strengthened these investment policies and oversight practices to enhance transparency, accountability, and long-term performance.

These efforts are not just technical decisions; they reflect a broader commitment to mālama 'āina and to ensuring that OHA's resources are managed in ways that create lasting, meaningful impact for Native Hawaiian communities. By putting these frameworks in place, we are better positioned to expand opportunities in areas like housing, education, and economic stability.

Another important step forward has been the development of the AHO program in collaboration with American Savings Bank. This partnership reflects what is possible when we work together across sectors with a shared commitment



**Keoni  
Souza**

VICE CHAIR  
Trustee,  
At-Large

to our lāhui. The AHO program was designed to expand access to financial resources and pathways to homeownership – something that remains out of reach for too many Native Hawaiian families. Through this initiative, the program has already helped 31 Native Hawaiian families secure homes in Hawai'i.

By creating opportunities for our people to establish homeownership, we are investing not only in individual families, but in the long-term stability and strength of our communities.

At the same time, our communities continue to face unexpected challenges due to natural disasters. In response, OHA established two emergency relief efforts to support our people during times of crisis.

First was the \$5 Million Kanaaho grants for Emergency Financial Assistance to support Maui families impacted by the devastating wildfires in 2023. Then in 2025 and 2026, the \$6.1 Million I Ola program in collaboration with Hawaiian Council. This program started by assisting those affected by governmental shutdowns, then pivoted to assist those affected by the Kona Low storms and severe flooding, ensuring that immediate needs could be met while families worked toward recovery.

These efforts are grounded in a simple principle: when our people are in need, we respond by showing up for one another as our kūpuna taught us.

While each initiative represents meaningful progress, they also remind us that our work is ongoing; the challenges facing our lāhui are complex and cannot be solved by one initiative. Yet by strengthening policy, building meaningful partnerships, and responding with compassion in times of need, we are building a stronger foundation for the future.

Together, we move forward, grounded in our values, committed to our people, and carrying a deep kuleana to one another, to stand beside our lāhui in their hardest moments, to lift them when they cannot stand alone, and to ensure that our lāhui not only survives, but endures with strength, dignity, and hope. ■

## Divided There's Nothing We Can Do; United Nothing Can Stop Us

*This month's column features a report from my office by Carina Watase, my trustee aide, on a recent talk story session with students at Punahou School.*

Last month, Trustee Akina was invited to speak with haumāna and kumu at Punahou School as part of the Davis Democracy Initiative, a program designed to encourage civic engagement and provide students with a space to explore public policy through open and respectful dialogue.

The session centered on the principle, E hana kākou (let's work together), which Trustee Akina described as a guiding philosophy in both his public service and community work. He shared how this approach has shaped his efforts to expand civic participation in Hawai'i, including increasing voter engagement in OHA elections.

Rather than delivering a traditional lecture, Trustee Akina engaged students



Trustee Akina with Punahou kumu and event organizers Dr. David Ball and Dr. Pamela Sakamoto.  
- Courtesy Photo

and faculty in a wide-ranging discussion that connected this principle to real-world policy challenges.

One of the most memorable moments came as he explained how to approach disagreement and decision-making.

"Think of Venn diagrams," he said. "Each individual group has concerns in a separate circle. The place to start with 'E hana kākou' would be where they intersect. In that intersection, we begin to work together and grow that territory. It also means choosing not to focus on



**Keli'i  
Akina,  
Ph.D.**

Trustee,  
At-Large

areas outside that intersection, where differences may make collaboration unfruitful."

He continued, "If we spend time working to grow the intersection, we ultimately accomplish what people in society will benefit from the most. We have to take into consideration where we all come together."

This framework shaped his explanation of how the Board of Trustees seeks to operate. Despite differing viewpoints, trustees often collaborate by identifying common ground,

particularly in areas such as emergency funding for Native Hawaiian communities, prioritizing practical outcomes over ideological division.

Students asked how this approach applies in practice, particularly in a politically diverse environment. Trustee Akina explained that collaboration requires both principle and pragmatism, knowing when to stand firm, and when to work together for the greater good. To him, leadership should be grounded in judgment, values, and a commitment to serving the community.

The talk story concluded with a reminder that "E hana kākou" is not just an idea, but a practice. It calls on all of us to be intentional about where we focus our efforts and how we work together.

In a follow-up conversation, one student reflected on the unique atmosphere of the talk story. She described Trustee Akina's style as relaxed and inclusive, noting that it encouraged participation from a wide range of perspectives and helped create a space where students felt comfortable sharing their views openly.

She also shared that the discussion reshaped her understanding of what it means to think more independently in politics. Rather than avoiding issues, she came to see open-mindedness as a willingness to look beyond party lines and focus on shared goals, an approach she connected directly to the principle of "E hana kākou."

Conversations like these serve as a reminder that even in the face of complex challenges, progress is possible when we begin with what we share and build from there. ■

## Native Politics, Native Prosperity

For many who call Hawai'i home, Native politics can feel distant. The daily need to provide food and shelter for the 'ohana understandably takes priority over engagement in policy and governance. Yet we have an opportunity to shift that reality – to frame Native politics as essential to Native prosperity.

Prosperity, as defined here, is a thriving and flourishing condition, especially in financial terms. It aligns with a broader mission: to strengthen the Native Hawaiian economy, deepen relationships grounded in Hawaiian values, and organize our community into a unified economic, social, and political force.

Central to this is the development of a far more potent political voice.

Politics is both the art and science of governance and the sum of relationships in society shaped by power and authority. While the Native Hawaiian community has experienced a renaissance in language, culture, law, medicine, business, and the arts, political engagement remains an area where greater understanding is needed.

It is in politics that disenfranchisement and dispossession are most clearly revealed – and where remedies must be pursued.

The overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 was a political act. The response, therefore, must also be political. We must never accept the consequences of that injustice, nor grow accustomed to dispossession. We cannot afford to sit on the sidelines.

Justice does not always mean returning to a former model of governance. It also means transforming historical pain into a driver for future prosperity. Governments rise and fall, but nations endure. The lāhui remains. The question is: what have we learned, and how do we move forward?

Queen Lili'uokalani offers a profound example. She resisted injustice with courage and restraint, choosing a path that avoided bloodshed. Had she chosen otherwise many of us might not be here



**Brickwood  
Galuteria**

Trustee,  
At-Large

today. Because she stood down, we can stand up. For that, we owe her deep gratitude and a commitment to carry forward her legacy.

Her life reminds us that courage is a conscious decision to act despite risk. It is not the easy path, but it is the necessary one. Courage saves lives, inspires hope, and calls us to act for the good of others.

In her final years, the Queen urged us not to fear failure but to remain steadfast, discerning, and balanced – walking what she described as a "razor's edge." Her words challenge us to be courageous in times of uncertainty, clear in judgment, and committed for the long term, guided by aloha.

Political strength, however, requires more than inspiration – it requires organization. In governance, numbers matter. Majorities determine outcomes across county councils, the legislature, and the governor's office. Understanding this reality is key to building influence.

In 2011, Act 195\* was passed to help unify Native Hawaiians and establish a recognized political entity. Even if only a portion of the Hawaiian community engaged as a unified voice – albeit a voting bloc – their collective power would rival or exceed some of the largest political organizations in the state.

This is the potential of kū'ē: organized, disciplined, and purposeful advocacy. When exercised wisely, it becomes a force that can shape policy and improve conditions not only for Native Hawaiians, but for all who live in Hawai'i.

The path forward is clear: unity. He waiwai nui ka lōkahi – unity is our greatest treasure. If we stand together, engage politically, and act with intention, we can transform our collective strength into lasting prosperity for the lāhui and future generations.

Mālama for now. ■

*\*Act 195 officially recognized Native Hawaiians as Hawai'i's only Indigenous people.*



Note: Trustee columns represent the views of individual trustees and may not reflect the official positions adopted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Board of Trustees.

#### **Kaiali'i Kahele**

Chair | Trustee, Hawai'i  
Tel: 808.594.1855  
Email:  
TrusteeKahele@oha.org

#### **Keoni Souza**

Vice Chair | Trustee,  
At-Large  
Tel: 808.594.1857  
Email:  
TrusteeSouza@oha.org

#### **Dan Ahuna**

Trustee, Kaua'i and  
Ni'ihau  
Tel: 808.594.1751  
Email:  
TrusteeAhuna@oha.org

#### **Kaleihikina Akaka**

Trustee, O'ahu  
Tel: 808.594.1854  
Email:  
TrusteeAkaka@oha.org

#### **Keli'i Akina, Ph.D.**

Trustee, At-Large  
Tel: 808.594.1859  
Email: TrusteeAkina@  
oha.org

#### **Luana Alapa**

Trustee, Moloka'i and  
Lāna'i  
Tel: 808.594.1874  
Email: TrusteeAlapa@  
oha.org

#### **Brickwood Galuteria**

Trustee, At-Large  
Tel: 808.594.1860  
Email:  
TrusteeGaluteria@  
oha.org

#### **Carmen "Hulu" Lindsey**

Trustee, Maui  
Tel: 808.594.1858  
Email:  
TrusteeHuluLindsey@  
oha.org

#### **John D. Waihe'e IV**

Trustee, At-Large  
Tel: 808.594.1876  
Email:  
TrusteeWaihee@oha.org

### **BURIAL NOTICE: KE'EKE'E AHUPUA'A, PUNA DIS- TRICT, ISLAND OF HAWAI'I**

Kulaiwi Archaeology, LLC is preparing a burial treatment plan (BTP) for the protection of an archaeological site containing human skeletal remains (Site 50-10-55-30025), located within the existing Kalani Honua Retreat, Ke'eke'e Ahupua'a, Puna District, Island of Hawai'i (TMK: [3] 1-2-09: 029). The site was identified during a re-survey of the property conducted by Haun & Associates (Haun and Henry 2014). The landowner, Retreat Village at Kalani Kai, LLC, plans to preserve the Site 30025 burial, along with 10 additional non-burial sites (or portions of them) identified during the re-survey. These sites will be preserved within a series of 9 proposed preservation areas located throughout the project area. All persons having information on traditional cultural practices and places located within Ke'eke'e Ahupua'a and the vicinity of the project parcel are hereby requested to contact Solomon Kailihiwa, Kulaiwi Archaeology, LLC, P.O. Box 1213, Captain Cook, HI 96704, (808) 493-8884 within thirty (30) days of this notice.

### **BURIAL NOTICE: 'O'OMA AHUPUA'A, NORTH KONA DISTRICT**

All persons having information concerning unmarked burials on TMK: (3) 7-3-009:022 (por.) in 'O'oma 2nd Ahupua'a, North Kona District, Island of Hawai'i, are requested to contact U'ilani Kūali'i at ASM Affiliates (808) 969-6066, ukualii@asmaffiliates.com, 507-A E. Lanikaula St. Hilo, HI 96720 and/or Traven Apiki, DLNR-SHPD Burial Sites Program (808) 933-9322, 40 Po'okela St., Hilo, HI 96720.

Names known to be associated with 'O'oma ahupua'a include Arakaki, Channels, Hall, Ho'ohuli, Kaakau, Kahananui, Kahelekahi, Kalua, Kama, Kamaka, Kameheu,

Keana'aina Koanui, Kuahini, Lili-noe, Mamali, McDonald, Medeiros, Mitchell, Nenio, Punihaoe.

Appropriate treatment of the remains will occur in accordance with HRS, Chapter 6E, respective to this burial site. The landowner intends to preserve the burial in place, following the preparation of a Burial Treatment Plan in consultation with any identified descendants and with the approval of the Hawai'i Island Burial Council. All interested parties should respond within thirty (30) days of this notice and provide information to DLNR-SHPD adequately demonstrating lineal descent from these specific Native Hawaiian remains, or cultural descent from ancestors once residing or buried in the same ahupua'a or moku.

### **CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: ALA WAI COMMUNITY PARK CLUB- HOUSE RENOVATION AND RESTORATION PROJECT**

Cultural Surveys Hawai'i (CSH), at the request of Gerald Park Urban Planner, on behalf of the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Design and Construction (DDC), is conducting a cultural impact assessment and Ka Pa'akai Analysis for the Ala Wai Community Park Clubhouse Renovation and Restoration project, Waikīkī Ahupua'a, Honolulu (Kona) District, O'ahu, TMK: (1) 2-7-036:005.

The DDC proposes to repair and renovate the Ala Wai Community Park Clubhouse with the long-term objective of preserving the historic structure. Situated on a recreational lot in the Honolulu neighborhood commonly referred to as McCully-Mō'ilīlī, the lot is bounded by Kapi'olani Boulevard to the north, Ala Wai Canal to the south, Ala Wai Field and Park to the east, and McCully Street to the west.

CSH seeks your knowledge, insight, and input on the following topics:

- Your knowledge of traditional

cultural practices within the proposed project area and Waikīkī Ahupua'a

- The different natural resources associated with your specific cultural practice

- Referrals to other kūpuna, kama'aina, and traditional cultural practitioners knowledgeable about the proposed project area and Waikīkī Ahupua'a

- Your comments or thoughts on the potential impacts the proposed project may have on cultural sites, practices, and resources within the proposed project area and Waikīkī Ahupua'a

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact CSH Cultural Researcher, Kellen Tanaka by email at ktanaka@culturalsurveys.com or Chantellee Spencer at cspencer@culturalsurveys.com.

### **CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: KARSTEN THOT BRIDGE REPLACE- MENT PROJECT, WAHIAWĀ, O'AHU**

On behalf of the Hawaii Department of Transportation, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) is preparing a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) for the replacement of the historic Karsten Thot Bridge in Wahiawā, O'ahu. The bridge, which runs along Kamehameha Highway and crosses the Kaukonahua Stream, requires replacement due to its advanced age and structural deterioration. The proposed project will incorporate the bridge's character-defining historic features into the new structure.

SWCA is seeking community input regarding cultural and historic knowledge of the area surrounding the bridge and its ahupua'a, including past and present land use, cultural traditions, gathering practices, and any concerns related to cultural practices in the vicinity of the project area. This input will help inform the CIA and ensure that traditional and customary practices are

considered during the environmental review process. Please contact SWCA at hawaii.cultural.consultation@swca.com or (808) 437-8974. Mahalo for your kōkua.

### **CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: HAWAIIAN ELECTRIC HALEAKALĀ RESILIENCY PROJECT**

Pacific Consulting Services, Inc. (PCSI) is preparing a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) and Ka Pa'akai Analysis in support of an Environmental Assessment (EA) being prepared in compliance with Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343 for the Hawaiian Electric Haleakalā Resiliency Project. The Project is intended to improve the resilience of Hawaiian Electric's transmission and distribution facilities in the upper elevations of Haleakalā by making them less vulnerable to the harsh weather conditions. The Project goals include reducing outages for customers on the circuit and reducing the potential for harmful interactions between facilities and protected endemic seabirds that nest on Haleakalā. Most of the Project occurs on state land and a small portion is within Haleakalā National Park. Roughly 2.7 miles of existing power lines on wood poles are proposed to be replaced within portions of TMKs (2) 2-2-007:005, 006, 008, 013, and 014; and 2-3-005:001 and 002. Several alternatives for replacing the existing poles are being considered. Placing the transmission lines within conduit near the ground is the preferred alternative. PCSI is seeking community input regarding cultural traditions, legends, and practices pertaining to this area. Additional project information is available at pcsihawaii.com/haleakala. A link is available at that website to contact the project team to request more information or volunteer to share your knowledge. You may also email

**SEE PUBLIC NOTICES ON PAGE 34**

Shannon Gomez at info@pcsihawaii.com. Mahalo!

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: PROPOSED WEST MAUI GREENWAYS PROJECT, LĀHAINĀ AND KĀ'ANAPALI, MAUI**

On behalf of the County of Maui, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), ASM Affiliates (ASM) is preparing a Cultural Impact Assessment study for the proposed West Maui Greenway (referred to hereafter as the 'proposed project'). The proposed project would provide a multi-use trail extending from Lāhainā Pali Trailhead in Ukumehame Ahupua'a along the coast to Lipoa Point in Honolua Ahupua'a, traversing several Tax Map Key (TMK) parcels: (4)1-2-

002:001, 1-3-002:999, 1-3-005:029, 037; 1-3-009:015, 0198; 1-3-011:999; in the Lāhainā and Kā'anapali Districts, Island of Maui.

The DPR is proposing to develop a 25-mile-long, multi-use trail along the coast of northwest Maui, connecting Ukumehame to Lipoa Point. The project alignment is divided into seven segments and will be implemented in phases. In addition to walking and bike paths, the greenway will also provide a safe alternative transportation option to using the Honoapi'īlani Highway. The design plans have not yet been finalized, with three of the seven project alignment segments having both alternative and preferred routes. More information can be found at: westmaui.greenway.org

The purpose of this CIA is to inform an Environmental Assess-

ment and aims to document and assess the potential effects this project may have on significant cultural, natural, and historical resources, as well as traditional customary practices. ASM is in search of kama'āina who may know about the area's cultural resources and or cultural uses of the project area; and past or ongoing traditional customary practices that have or continue to occur in the proposed project area. ASM is also seeking input regarding strategies to prevent or mitigate impacts on culturally valued resources and or traditional customary practices. If you have and are willing to share such information, please contact Candace Gonzales at cgonzales@asmaffiliates.com, phone (808) 969-6066, mailing address ASM Affiliates 507-A E. Lanikaula Street, Hilo, HI 96720. Mahalo.

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND KA PA'AKAI ANALYSIS NOTICE: KALAOA 5 AHUPUA'A, NORTH KONA, HAWAII ISLAND**

Kulaiwi Archaeology, LLC is conducting a cultural impact assessment (CIA) and Ka Pa'akai Analysis for TMK: (3) 7-3-004:002, Kalaoa 5 Ahupua'a, North Kona District, Island of Hawaii. The project proponent, Palamanui, plans to construct the Kalaoa Well Site No. 2 on the subject parcel. All persons having information on traditional cultural practices and places located within Kalaoa Ahupua'a and the vicinity of the project parcel are hereby requested to contact Solomon Kailihiwa, Kulaiwi Archaeology, LLC, P.O. Box 1213, Captain Cook, HI 96704, (808) 493-8884 within thirty (30) days of this notice. ■

**E nā 'ohana Hawai'i:** If you are planning a reunion or looking for genealogical information, *Ka Wai Ola* will print your listing at no charge on a space-available basis. Listings should not exceed 200 words. OHA reserves the right to edit all submissions for length. Listings will run for three months from submission, unless specified. Send your information by mail, or e-mail kwo@OHA.org. E ola nā mamo a Hāloa!

**SEARCH**

**AIPIA/KAHANANUI** - Descendants of Joseph Keli Aipia and Meleana Penikala Kahananui of Kalaoa, Kona, Hawaii. Family Reunion on July 18, 2026, at Kualoa Beach Park, O'ahu. Contact: Nanikehau Keama (808) 594-6289.

**AKAU** - Descendants of Sen Kau Ching Akeni/Kamakahemali'ili'i Awa Kepe'a are having a family reunion in Waimea, Hawaii on June 26-28, 2026. Calling all descendants of their three children (1) William Paul Mahinauli Akeni Akau/Roseline Kealohapuaule Kalaluhu and William Paul Mahinauli Akeni Akau/Lydia Awaa Kahookano (2) Pekina Akeni/Goo Kim Seu (3) Apikai (Apitai) Akeni/Kahana Maluwaikoo. For more info and to register visit: akauohana.org/2026reunion email: huiohanoakau@gmail.com or call: 808-444-5756.

**DUVAUCHELLE** - 'Ohana Reunion 2026, "Connecting Generations. Celebrating 'Ohana." July 23-26 - One Ali'i Park, Moloka'i. For more information and to register visit: www.duvauchelleohanareunion.org. Registration Deadline: May 31, 2026.

**KA'AUHAUKANE** - Na Lālā O Ana Lumaukahilī'owahinekapu Ka'auhaukane will celebrate our 'Ohana Reunion - Potluck Lunch on Sunday, August 9, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Bellows Air Force Station, Picnic Pavilion 5-A. Deadline to register, Sunday, July 12, 2026. To ensure base access, please contact your family representative: Peter Machado 808-282-3732 (Kapiko and Quinn); Linda Ho 808-239-8081 (Iseke); Louie Peterson 808-216-9331 (Isaacs and Iseke); Colleen Tam Loo 808-729-8662 or Puanani Orton 808-381-3510 (McKee).

**KELEPOLO** - Calling the descendants of Maika'aloa and Annie (Kumulau) Kelepolo of Kainaliu, Kona, Hawaii and their seven keiki: Albert, Peter, Josephine, William, Joseph, Isabella, and Lillian. We are planning an 'ohana reunion for July 17-19, 2026, in Kona, Hawaii. Contact Monico Galieto (grandson of William Kelepolo) at kelepoloohana@gmail.com or call (808) 936-5682. When emailing, provide your name, phone number, mailing/email addresses, and how you're related, I will send an information packet.

**KINIKAHIKOAINOA-PAHANE** - 'Auhea 'oukou e nā mamo a Kanialama? Calling on the direct descendants of Kinikahikoainoa and Pooi Pahane, along with Kaianui and Nakahili, parents of Kanialama and Kaohuaino Kaianui, respectively. This includes ka 'ohana Long, Kahanu, Gooman, and the descendants of Kelupaka Kaianui and Pila Kauahiokona. Join us at our biennial reunion for mele, mo'olelo and mo'okū'auhau... and of course, le'ale'a! For more information, email: pukanaokanialama26@gmail.com E ola ka hā loa o ka 'ohana!

**KUPIHEA** - 'Ohana of Solomon N. Kupihea and M. Hattie Kuapahi Kupihea: Join us on Kaua'i July 12-19, 2026! Daily planned activities to strengthen bonds and learn faces. Evening potluck dinners for genealogy and talk story. Visit our website for more information. <https://bit.ly/Kupihea-Kuapahi-reunion-2026>. Email: kupihea.reunion@gmail.com

**MAR** - Descendants of Yuen Mar and Annie Moi Lau - Join us for our 'ohana gathering on Sat., June 27, 2026, at 'Aina Moana Park (Magic Island), in Honolulu, Hawaii. For more information, email Aina at: jsimkings77@icloud.com. Please provide your name, contact info and your 'ohana relationship.

**PIO** - Descendants of Kepio and Keoahu of Kaupō, Maui, are having a family reunion on Maui, Labor Day weekend, Sept. 4-6, 2026, at Pukalani Community Center. Their six children used the surnames Kepio or Pio: Sampson Kahaleuahi (Anadasia Kealoha); Victoria Nakoaelua (Kahaleauki); Maria Malaea (Keahi/Adams, Sam Akahi Sr.); Samuel Kaukani (Mele Kakaio, Rebecca Malulu); Ipoaloha (Kalalani Kekiwi); and Joseph Kaleohano (Elizabeth Nakula, Minnie Aloia). Contact: Ka'apuni Peters-Wong 808-375-4321; Toni Kowalski-Dacquel 808-436-1845; Valda Baisa Andaya 808-572-9245; Ululani Opiana Glass 808-446-9309; Kapiolani Adams 808-778-6383; or email pioohana@gmail.com.

**WONG-HAM** - I am searching for members from the Wong-Ham 'ohana for genealogy purposes. There were four siblings: Gordon, Hymen, Melba and Eldora. Before Aunty Eldora passed, she turned over the genealogy information that she collected over the years to 'ohana "Kalahiki." As we are unable to identify who this is, we are reaching out and asking that you contact me. My name is Keola Leong. I can be reached at (808) 284-2211 or email me at rleong04@yahoo.com. ■

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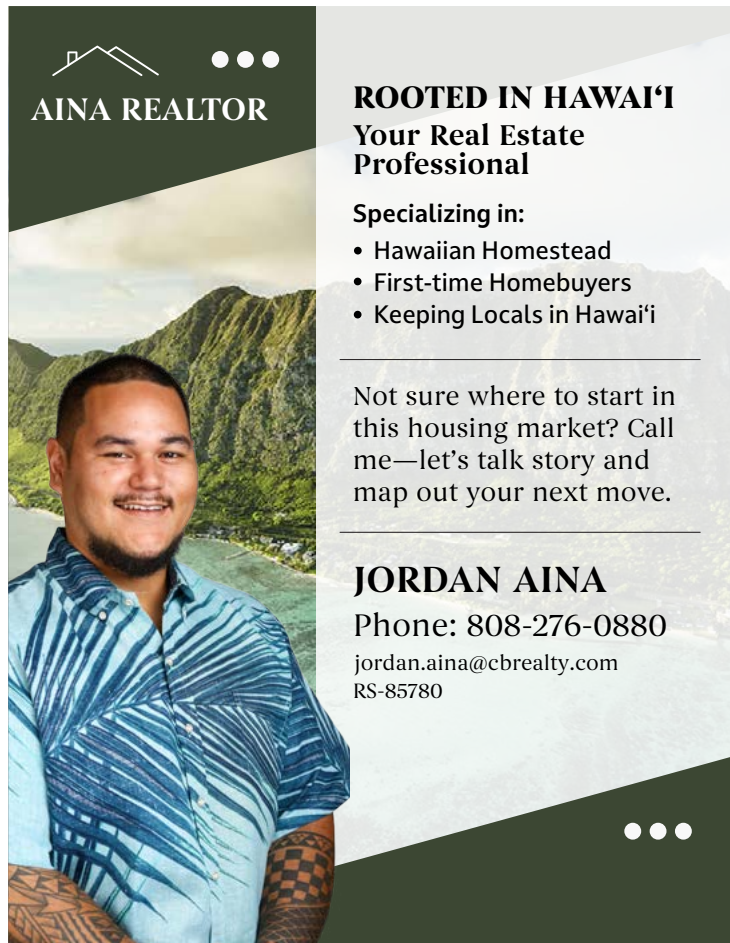
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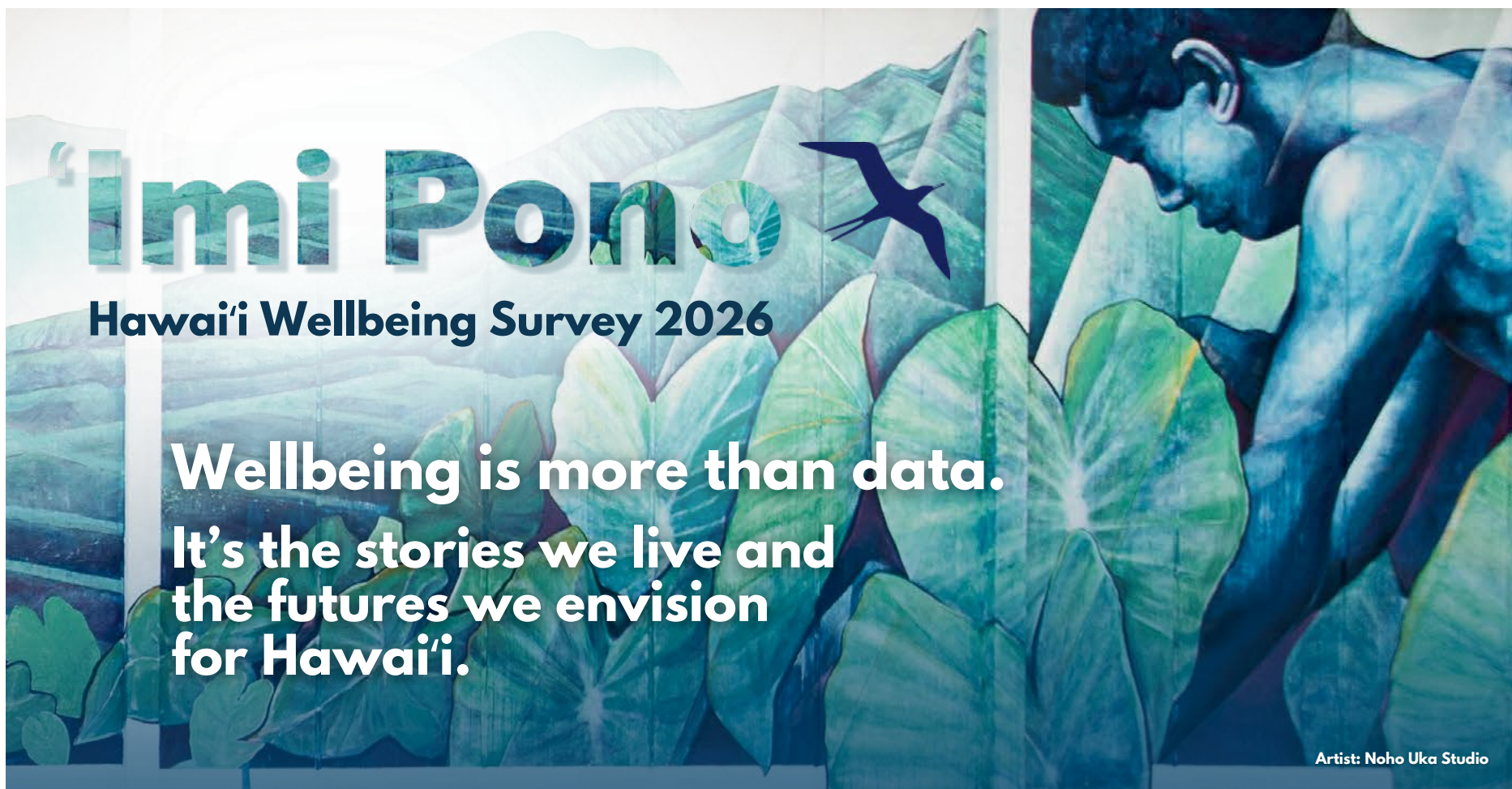
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