



# Ka Wai Ola

NEWS FOR THE LĀHUI      kawaiola.news

Iulai (July) 2026 | Vol. 43, No. 07

## GIVING KŪPEKE BACK TO ITSELF

PAGES 18-20

The ahupua'a of Kūpeke on the east end of Moloka'i Island encompasses 300 acres - which includes a 34-acre fishpond. It has been protected and is being stewarded thanks to the efforts of nonprofit Kūpeke Ahupua'a led by Kia'i Po'o (lead caretaker) La'a Poeoe. - *Courtesy Photo*

### Royal Hawaiian Band

July 3, 10, & 17, Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O‘ahu

The Royal Hawaiian Band holds free concerts on the ‘Iolani Palace Grounds most Fridays. [rhb-music.com](http://rhb-music.com)

### Pāka & Print

July 4, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Honolulu, O‘ahu

Free community screen printing featuring USA OUT NOW, Makua Against Militarism, and Demilitarize Hawai‘i designs. Bring your own items to be printed and for drying. Printing in black ink only. *Theft of a Nation* will be reenacted.

### ‘Ilau Ka Hula

July 4, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. | *Kapālama, O‘ahu*  
Celebrate hula and lāhui on the great lawn at Bishop Museum. Live music, food vendors, and a mākeke. Fun for hula lovers of all ages. [paifoundation.org](http://paifoundation.org)

### Race for Hawai‘i’s Future 🌿

July 5, 6:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Mauiola, O‘ahu

An ‘ohana-centered outrigger canoe race that educates, empowers and perpetuates skills like - open-ocean navigation, teamwork, water changes and water safety. [imiolacanoecub.com](http://imiolacanoecub.com)

### 8th Annual Waikīkī Steel Guitar Week

July 5 - 12 | *Waikīkī, O‘ahu*

Evening concerts and contests at the Royal Grove Stage. Livestreaming on FB or YouTube @hawaiiansteelguitarshowcase.  
[waikikisteelguitarweek.com](http://waikikisteelguitarweek.com)

### Kapa Wauke Workshop

July 10, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
July 11, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
*Mānoa, O‘ahu*

Learn to make items necessary for iwi kūpuna reburial. Register at [hawaiian-churchhawaiiinei.org](http://hawaiian-churchhawaiiinei.org)

### Ka ‘Aha Hula at Waimea - The Gathering of Hula at Waimea

July 11, 12, 15, 18 & 25, 11:00 a.m.  
*Waimea, O‘ahu*

Enjoy hula presentations by a variety of hālau. [waimeavalley.net](http://waimeavalley.net)

### Mahalo i Kau Kumu Gift Fair & School Supply Drive for Teachers

July 11, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
*Kapolei, O‘ahu*

Support Hawai‘i’s teachers at Ka Makana Ali‘i gift fair and school drive. Shop handcrafted gifts and supplies. Giveaways all day.  
[islandcraftfairs.org/events](http://islandcraftfairs.org/events)

### Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards Show 🌿

July 11, 3:00 - 10:00 p.m. | *Waikīkī, O‘ahu*

Hawai‘i’s premier music awards program presented live at the Sheraton Waikīkī Grand Ballroom. For tickets go to [harahawaii.com](http://harahawaii.com)

### Kama‘āina Sunday

July 12, 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](http://iolanipalace.org)

### Goodwill Goes GLAM! 🌿

- July 16, 5:00 - 10:00 p.m. – *Fashion show, GLAM! Pre-sale.*
  - July 17, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
  - July 18, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Honolulu, O‘ahu*

Find secondhand treasures - brand-name, vintage, and one-of-a-kind clothes and accessories. Blaisdell Exhibition Hall.  
[goodwillhawaii.org/glam](http://goodwillhawaii.org/glam)

### Kapa Wauke, Kaula Hau, Hina‘i Lauhala & ‘Umeke Ipu Workshop

July 17, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
July 18, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
*Mānoa, O‘ahu*

Learn to make items necessary for iwi kūpuna reburial. Register at [hawaiian-churchhawaiiinei.org](http://hawaiian-churchhawaiiinei.org)

### 49th Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival 🌿

July 17 - 18, 2:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
*Waikīkī, O‘ahu*

A 2-day non-competitive hula festival honoring Lot Kapuāiwa Kamehameha V. Cultural demonstrations, a mākeke, and workshops. [mgfhawaii.org](http://mgfhawaii.org)

### Molokai Holokai Ho‘olaule‘a 🌿

July 17, 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
July 18, 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
*Kaunakakai, Moloka‘i*

The Ho‘olaule‘a includes a Maui to Moloka‘i canoe race, beach clean-up, fun run, art contests, cultural workshops, food, music and more.  
[molokaiholokai.com](http://molokaiholokai.com)

### Pu‘uhonua Mākeke

July 18, 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

### Papa Hula Kāne 🌿

July 18, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
*Lanikūhonua, O‘ahu*

A free hula workshop to improve access to strengthen physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing. [kikahafoundation.org](http://kikahafoundation.org)

### Kū Kia‘i Mauna!

July 19, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
*Pu‘uhuluhulu, Hawai‘i Island*

Celebrate the mauna with mauna updates, music, food (pot luck salads and desserts welcome) and filming of the Mele Kūkulu music video. Bring chairs, umbrellas, instruments, hae Hawai‘i, pop-up tents. Water provided. No alcohol allowed.

### 25th Annual Native Hawaiian Convention 🌿

July 20 - 22 | *Honolulu, O‘ahu*

Attend a day of pre-convention cultural workshops followed by plenary sessions, breakout discussions, evening workshops, networking, live music, a pau hana bar, and a mākeke at the Blaisdell Center. [hawaiiancouncil.org](http://hawaiiancouncil.org)

### Hāna Mele & Cultural Gathering 2026 🌿

July 23, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
July 24, 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. | *Hāna, Maui*

A 2-day event featuring mele, hula, cultural workshops, youth leadership, and local agricultural partnerships.  
[hanaarts.org](http://hanaarts.org)

### Lili‘uokalani Keiki Hula Festival 🌿

July 23 - 25 | *Honolulu, O‘ahu*

An annual 3-day hula competition for keiki ages 6-12 from across the pae ‘āina and Japan. [keikihula.org](http://keikihula.org)

### 12th Annual Summer Jam 🌿

July 25, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
*Hilo, Hawai‘i Island*

A smoke and alcohol-free health fair with crafts and Eat the Street food vendors. Fun for everyone at Francis Wong Stadium parking lot. IG @bisac

### Summer Concert Series

July 25, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. | *Hale‘iwa, O‘ahu*

Live Hawaiian music and hula featuring Nick La‘a, Micah G and Ho‘onu‘a.  
[waimeavalley.net](http://waimeavalley.net)

### OHA Genealogy Workshop I & II

July 28, 6:00 p.m. & July 29, 10:00 a.m. | *Kaunakakai, Moloka‘i*

Learn to use research tools such as [kipuka.com](http://kipuka.com) and the Papakilo Database. Access historical records, land documents, and archival resources. Limited space. Registration required. Call Malu at 808-582-0516.

## LĀ HO‘IHO‘I EA (SOVEREIGNTY RESTORATION DAY) CELEBRATIONS ACROSS THE PAE ‘ĀINA



### Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea ma Hāmākua Celebration

July 25, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
*Pa‘auilo, Hawai‘i Island*

Celebrate with live music performances, food, vendors, hana no‘eau, and more. IG @lahoihoieahamakua

### Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea 🌿

July 26, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
*Honolulu, O‘ahu*

A public community art gathering around EA at Thomas Square, where Hawai‘i’s sovereignty was restored in 1843. Practice lauhala weaving, block printing, kuku kapa, wiki lei, pā‘ani kōnane, kālai and more. [puuhonua-society.org/activations/la-hoi-hoi-ea](http://puuhonua-society.org/activations/la-hoi-hoi-ea)

### Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea

July 31, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
*Waimea Valley, O‘ahu*

To commemorate this important day kama‘āina receive 50% off admission to Waimea Valley.

### Welo Ka Hae Hawai‘i – Celebrating Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea

July 31, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.  
*Kapālama, O‘ahu*

Reenactment of the flag raising of July 31, 1843, followed by an evening of mele, conversations, mea ‘ai and expressions of ea. Registration required. [bishopmuseum.org](http://bishopmuseum.org).

### Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea Wai‘anae

August 1, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
*Wai‘anae, O‘ahu*

Aloha ‘āina village, ku‘i kalo, music, food, activities and more at Pōka‘ī Bay Beach Park.  
[liliuokalanicourt.org](http://liliuokalanicourt.org) ■



Ho‘ākoakoa Lāhui Events are sponsored by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to support nonprofit organization events that offer significant benefit to the Native Hawaiian community. For more information visit [OHA.org](http://OHA.org).



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## I Mua Kākou

Aloha mai kākou,

‘Aha ‘Ōpio, OHA's flagship Native Hawaiian leadership and civic engagement program, concluded last month. After lying dormant for two decades, it was revived to cultivate the next generation of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi leaders. For one week, haumāna from across Hawai‘i and the continent immersed themselves in leadership, governance, and public service.

Programs like ‘Aha ‘Ōpio leave me hopeful, not because these young people have all the answers, but because they remind us that the future belongs to those who engage it.

At this moment, legal challenges threaten legacies entrusted to us by a princess who dedicated her inheritance to an educational future she would never live to see; a prince and statesman who crossed oceans and endured indignities to secure homelands and opportunity for a people facing extinction, carrying their voice and aspirations into distant rooms deciding their future; and generations of kia'i whose defense of valleys, bomb-scarred islands, and marine sanctuaries helped spark an aloha ‘āina renaissance and a fledgling OHA.

It can be tempting to retreat into frustration, cynicism, or resignation. I understand that feeling. It surfaces when decisions about Hawaiians are made without Hawaiians by institutions that mistake authority for understanding – a pattern that persists despite decades of Native Hawaiian leadership, advocacy, and achievement.

But moments like these invite more, not less, participation. What are we prepared to defend? What responsibilities do we owe the lands, institutions, and opportunities entrusted to us? Who possesses the character and courage to help lead us there?

The wellbeing of Native Hawaiians will be shaped not only by who serves at OHA, but by who serves throughout government, education,

business, nonprofits, and community life.

Whenever I wonder whether one voice can matter, I think about how much of what we cherish today exists because someone before us decided theirs did.

A loko i'a restored. A heiau protected. ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i spoken by a new generation. None resulted from a single victory, election, court case, or leader. They exist because people chose to engage when disengagement was easier and persisted when success was uncertain.

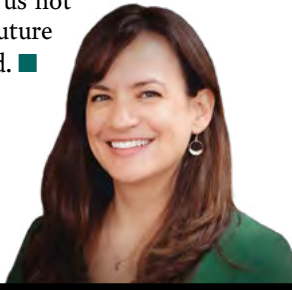
This summer, I witnessed young people dedicate their time to learning how government works, how advocacy changes outcomes, and how leadership demands both courage and humility. If our ‘ōpio can dream, engage, and step forward with purpose, so can we.

To every Kānaka running for office this election season, my sincere mahalo. Our ‘ōpio are watching and learning from your example.

And to those whose kuleana is to vote – or who choose not to – your agency is no less consequential. The future our ‘ōpio inherit will be shaped in equal measure by our engagement and our absence from it; by the choices we make and the ones we leave to others.

For their sake, may we be as faithful to their future as those who came before us were to ours: the generations whose burdens became our opportunities, leaving us not only the power to choose our leaders, but a future in which we, too, might be entrusted to lead. ■

Mahalo nui,  
**Summer Lee Haunani Sylva**  
Ka Pouhana Kūikawā  
Interim Chief Administrator



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# Key Provisions in the 2027 NDAA Support Negotiated Solutions

By Kaiiali'i Kahele, OHA Board of Trustees Chairperson

**O**n June 15, key provisions within the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was passed by the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee. These provisions address the future of military-leased lands in Hawai'i, including lands at Pōhakuloa Training Area and Kahuku Training Area.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) specifically recognizes the significance of Section 2864, which establishes direction for the Department of the Army to pursue lease renewals on terms acceptable to both the State of Hawai'i and the Department of the Army, while also requiring critical environmental review and congressional reporting requirements.

Most encouraging is the NDAA's movement away from condemnation and toward negotiated solutions. The process outlined is consistent with OHA's long-standing position opposing condemnation – whether forcible or “friendly” – and insisting that lands held in public trust remain in the public trust and continue benefiting Native Hawaiians and future generations of Hawai'i's people. Senate language reflects important progress toward a more collaborative and constructive path forward.

OHA has also repeatedly emphasized the importance of addressing unresolved deficiencies in the EIS previously rejected by the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) in May 2025, and continues to advance its work to ensure that Native Hawaiian customary and traditional practices, natural and cultural resources, and public trust obligations, are fully documented and considered in any land use decisions affecting public trust lands leased by the military.

As part of this effort, OHA is actively moving forward with a comprehensive Ka Pa'akai Analysis (KPA) for the Pōhakuloa Training Area. The Board of Trustees has approved a Permitted Interaction Group allocation of \$60,000 to support this work.

OHA also notes that the NDAA contemplates the pursuit of future lease arrangements. As discussions continue regarding potential lease terms, community benefit commitments, land-back and lease-back models, and other components of any future agreement, OHA believes those arrangements must remain consistent with Hawai'i's environmental laws and public trust obligations.

Any benefits derived from renewed use of

these lands should reinforce the purposes of the public trust, protect traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practices, honor the history and significance of these lands, and preserve the value they were intended to provide for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries and future generations of Hawai'i's people.

This legislative development follows OHA's recent high-level engagement in Washington, D.C., where OHA leadership met with members of Hawai'i's Congressional Delegation, senior senate staff, and key stakeholders.

Notably, the Senate Armed Services Committee's action reflects meaningful progress in acknowledging Hawai'i's unique legal and cultural context. The removal of condemnation as an option and the requirement for renewed environmental review are consistent with what OHA has long advocated – that these lands must not be permanently alienated and that Hawai'i's concerns must be fully addressed in good faith.

Congress appears willing to respect Hawai'i's laws and institutions. The opportunity before us now is to fully embrace the responsibilities and authorities those laws entrust to us. OHA will continue to ensure Native Hawaiian rights and public trust responsibilities remain central to any future decisions.

The FY2027 NDAA is expected to advance to the full U.S. Senate for consideration by the end of July. OHA will continue to closely monitor the bill's progression and engage with federal and state partners as appropriate to ensure that the final legislation preserves protections for Native Hawaiian rights, cultural resources, and public trust lands.

OHA will also continue its coordination with DLNR and congressional offices to ensure that the EIS resubmission process is substantive, responsive, and consistent with Hawai'i law and prior state findings.

OHA remains committed to ensuring that any future disposition or renewal of military leases on Hawai'i lands: protects Native Hawaiian traditional and customary rights; upholds public trust obligations for kingdom and crown lands; avoids permanent alienation of public trust resources; ensures meaningful state and Native Hawaiian beneficiary consultation; and incorporates rigorous environmental review, including traditional and customary practices.

OHA will continue to provide technical support, policy input, and community engagement at the state and federal levels as this process advances in Hawai'i and Washington, D.C. ■

# Chinn Named OHA Director of Human Resources

By Bill Brennan, OHA Communications Director

**T**he Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has selected Leslie P. Chinn as its new Director of Human Resources, bringing to the organization nearly two decades of experience in employment law, employee and labor relations, human resources administration, and public-sector leadership.



Leslie P. Chinn  
- Photo: Nelson Gaspar

Chinn joins OHA from the City and County of Honolulu, where she served in senior human resources leadership roles and advised on a broad range of employment, labor, and compliance matters.

Her professional background also includes service with the City and County's Department of Corporation Counsel and the University of Hawai'i Office of the General Counsel, where she provided legal guidance on complex personnel, policy, and organizational issues.

“An HR director with deep employment law acumen, extensive HR experience in both private practice and public service, and a demonstrated ability to navigate complex regulatory and compliance environments is a rare asset in any organization,” said Summer Sylva, OHA Interim Chief Administrator.

“At OHA, it is an especially meaningful windfall. Leslie Chinn brings not only the technical grounding and judgment that comes from nearly two decades of legal and human resources leadership, including service in the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Human Resources and Department of Corporation Counsel, as well as the University of Hawai'i's Office of the General Counsel, but also the practical wisdom that comes from advising institutions through some of their most sensitive employment matters.

“Just as importantly, she brings an authentic, grounded presence – marked by aloha, integrity, and a genuine ease with people – that strengthens our ability to recruit, retain, and support high-caliber talent in service of OHA's mission and aspirations to be an employer of choice in Hawai'i's competitive job market.”

Chinn will lead OHA's human resources operations, including talent acquisition, employee relations, organizational development, labor relations, compliance, and workforce planning. Her appointment comes as OHA continues to strengthen its organizational capacity and advance efforts to attract, retain, and support a high-performing workforce dedicated to serving Native Hawaiian communities.

“I am honored to join the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and contribute to its important mission on behalf of Native Hawaiians and the people of Hawai'i,” said Chinn. “OHA's employees are among its greatest strengths, and I look forward to partnering with leadership and staff to build upon the organization's strong foundation. Together, we can continue creating a workplace where employees feel supported, valued, and empowered to do their best work in service of our beneficiaries and communities.”

Sylva noted that Chinn's appointment reflects OHA's ongoing commitment to strengthening organizational capabilities and fostering a workplace culture that attracts and retains talented professionals. ■

# An Ancestor Under Fire

## The Cultural and Environmental Impact of RIMPAC

By Wayne Chung Tanaka and Lenei Naipo

For many Hawai'i families who live in communities near or adjacent to military bases, the sounds of war and the byproducts of military training activities are woven into daily life.

One example is Waimānalo, O'ahu, where children fall asleep to the thunder of explosions, the echo of gunfire, and the rumble of military aircraft shaking the windows of their houses on military training days. Meanwhile, along Kahawai o Pūhā, community members work to restore a stream that once sustained thriving lo'i kalo, fisheries, and food systems, while confronting contamination caused by decades of military occupation.

These impacts on 'āina and surrounding communities demand far greater attention and discussion.

But they are only part of the story. What harms do military training activities, including this month's Rim of the Pacific Exercises (RIMPAC), inflict on the ocean and its physical, cultural, and ancestral connections to Hawai'i and her people?

### The Ocean as Ancestor, Relative, and Responsibility

Answering this question first requires an understanding of what the ocean means to Kānaka Maoli, and all who call Hawai'i home.

For Kānaka Maoli, the ocean is woven into genealogy, identity, and purpose. The *Kumulipo* traces the origins of life through successive stages of Pō, where early life emerges from the sea. It situates humans within a continuum of existence that begins in the ocean and extends through land, sky, and the spiritual realm, binding people to the natural world through ancestry.

This ancestral grounding shapes the kuleana to care for all 'āina, including the ocean, which has fed families, connected communities, guided navigation, and provided spaces for ceremony and learning for millennia.

Ocean-based practices such as kilo (observation) and the management of loko i'a (fishponds) reflect enduring pilina among people, 'āina, and akua. The ocean also carries cultural memory and embodies long-standing genealogical responsibilities.

When our ocean is harmed, the damage is not merely ecological. Families lose access to gathering areas, cultural practices erode, and ancestral knowledge becomes harder to pass on. For Kānaka Maoli, harm to the ocean is harm to kūpuna and to the source of life itself.

### RIMPAC, Military Exercises, and Our Ocean Waters

RIMPAC and similar ocean-impacting exercises extend beyond conventional Western measures of envi-



U.S. Marine Corps AAV-P7/A1 assault amphibious vehicles unload service members during an amphibious landing demonstration at Marine Corps Base Hawai'i (Kāne'ohe/Kailua, O'ahu) as part of the 2018 RIMPAC exercises. - Photo: US Marine Corps

ronmental harm. The following examples underscore the need for greater attention to these overlooked impacts.

**Land-based pollution:** On-land military exercises, including those that occur during RIMPAC, invariably introduce toxic contaminants to ma uka environments, where they can be transported into nearshore ocean waters via streams, runoff, and even air.

For example, testing has documented lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and additional contaminants in the wetlands of Waimānalo, just one of several areas used for combat training on O'ahu. These pollutants pose risks to aquatic ecosystems and the local communities they sustain.

Other military training sites, like Pōhakuloa, have also been associated with high levels of toxic pollutants including PFAS "forever chemicals," trichloroethylene, arsenic, beryllium, lead, and dioxins, as well as the historical use of depleted uranium munitions. These long-lasting contaminants can easily make their way to the ocean via groundwater and runoff into adjacent streams.

Finally, runaway fires from military training, such as the nearly 900 fires associated with military training at Pōhakuloa, also rapidly accelerate the spread of toxic compounds through the air, across the landscape, and inevitably into the sea.

**Water pollution:** RIMPAC 2026 will bring more than 40 ships and 25,000 personnel to Hawai'i. Environmental impact statements (EISs) indicate that when docked at Pearl Harbor, warships will offload wastewater for treatment, likely at the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam facility.

Given its history of unlawful discharges and an \$8.7 million Clean Water Act penalty in 2022, added strain on this dilapidated facility increases the risk of yet another massive sewage leak into our ocean.

At sea, ships may dump treated or untreated wastewater directly into the ocean, depending on their distance from shore. Sewage system failures, such as those that sidelined the *USS Gerald R. Ford* and *USS George H.W. Bush*, could also result in releases closer to land.

Other pollutants, from fire-fighting foams to oils, solvents, and other toxic chemicals used on military equipment, weapons, and vehicles, may also be released at sea or in port due to accidents, training exercises, deck washdowns, or rain.

**Wildlife and habitat impacts:** The Hawai'i-California Training and Testing EIS contemplates mine warfare training using underwater detonations, including near Pearl Harbor, Barbers Point, and Pearl City Peninsula.

The document acknowledges that such activities, as well as "military-expended materials" and anchoring, may damage coral reefs and cause years' worth of damage to marine life.

Military sonar, which has been linked to mass strandings of whales and dolphins in Hawai'i and elsewhere, is also projected to cause millions of disruptions to marine mammal behavior.

Hawai'i Island residents may recall the beaked whale that stranded itself in Hōnaunau in 2022 after the Navy confirmed its use of sonar off the Kona Coast. And Kaua'i residents may remember the mass stranding of 200 melon-headed whales in Hanalei Bay in 2004 which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) later confirmed was the "plausible, if not likely" result of active Navy sonar use.

Whales are also at risk of fatal ship strikes. In 2023, the Navy reached its permitted limit of three whale kills from vessel collisions of the California coastline – prompting it to ask permission from the National Marine Fisheries Service to kill more whales.

This came after an Australian ship participating in a U.S. Navy-led multinational exercise unknowingly struck, killed, and dragged two Fin whales – occasional visitors to Hawaiian waters – into San Diego Bay.

Meanwhile, the Navy's EIS for the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kaua'i proposes firing machine guns, rockets, and "inert" bombs at Ka'ula Island (located 23 miles from Ni'ihau) up to 55 times annually, more than once per week on average, near native seabird nests and monk seal and dolphin resting areas.

The continuation of RIMPAC's SINKEX exercises, in which decommissioned warships are intentionally sunk, threaten to damage deepwater habitats that take centuries to form.

**Aquatic invasive species risks:** Military activities and installations are well-known for their association with terrestrial invasive species, such as devil weed (first

# New Report Exposes the True Costs of the U.S. Military in Hawai'i

By Kyle Kajihira and Kauluponookaleihua Lu'uwai

From June 24 through the end of July, the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), the world's largest multinational training exercise, will conduct war games on Hawai'i's land, in its surrounding oceans, and across its skies. RIMPAC is a spectacle of sinking ships in the waters off Kaua'i, artillery explosions at Pōhakuloa, amphibious invasions at Mōkapu and Waimānalo, and droves of sailors from more than 30 countries descending on Waikīkī. This month-long occasion is a mere trace of the military's sweeping historic footprint in Hawai'i.

Even as the war with Iran and genocide in Palestine have dominated headlines, a military buildup in the Pacific aimed at containing China persists subliminally. This policy positions Hawai'i, with its heavy concentration of military bases and personnel, at the center of U.S. Indo-Pacific war planning.

Pro-military interest groups zealously lobby for ever-increasing military spending in the name of national security yet never provide an accurate accounting of the costs and consequences of such extensive militarization.

This year, the Trump administration brazenly requested \$1.5 trillion for the military – the largest military budget ever – as costs of living rise and safety net programs are slashed. The collision of those pressures is bringing new scrutiny to what the military presence in Hawai'i actually costs and, more importantly, who bears that burden.

Last month, the Institute for Policy Studies, along with 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures, 'Īlio'ulaokalani Coalition, Sierra Club Hawai'i, and other national organizations, co-produced the first multi-faceted report critically examining the military's impacts in Hawai'i.

*The True Cost of the U.S. Military in Hawai'i: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Economic, Environmental, Strategic, and Social Impacts of the U.S. Military Presence in Hawai'i*, thoroughly reveals groundbreaking findings in nine areas: historical land use and sovereignty, strategic doctrine, environmental harm with a focus on PFAS contamination, public health, economic impact, employment, housing affordability, land valuation, and base conversion.

This report comes as national discourse is increasingly critical of Pentagon spending and the statewide debate over the future of military leases on 46,000 acres of Hawaiian trust lands that expire beginning in 2028 intensifies. The report's key findings include:

- The military's actual economic contribution to Hawai'i is 30% less than federal and state officials claim: \$7.2 billion, not \$10 billion, or 6.4% of Ha-

wai'i's GDP rather than 9.2%. That sum does not even accommodate for the steep, in some ways incalculable, costs to the environment, public health, and the islands' long-term economic security.

- The health care, education, housing, food production, and energy-efficient housing sectors create more than 12 jobs per \$1 million investment, whereas only 5 jobs are produced by the same level of military spending. More spending from those non-military sectors also remains within Hawai'i's economy since most military personnel are only stationed in Hawai'i temporarily.
- The estimated fair market rent for these 65-year military leases totals \$133.7 billion rather than \$1 per lease.
- Military demand for off-base housing inflated average rents on O'ahu by 71% in 2024, costing non-military renters an additional \$234.8 million, or about \$1,848 annually per household.
- The toxic waste legacy is largely unaddressed – including the Red Hill fuel disaster – and PFAS remediation at just three installations is conservatively estimated at \$493 million, with indirect costs, including elevated cancer rates, water filtration, and lost food production potentially reaching into the billions.
- The bloated U.S. military presence in Hawai'i is inflated by imprecise threat assessments and an offensive doctrine that increases the risk of war with China. A defensive strategy would reduce escalation risks and free Hawai'i's land and resources for the islands' pressing ecological and social needs.

For decades, Native Hawaiians have led efforts to hold the U.S. military accountable. Now, this report gives policymakers, business leaders, and the broader public the tools to demand both accountability and a fundamental change in Hawai'i's relationship with the U.S. military.

The people of Hawai'i, especially Native Hawaiians whose claims to these leased Kingdom lands remain unrelinquished, are entitled to engage in decisions that will affect future generations with full knowledge of the true costs, risks, and benefits.

In the words of Dr. Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, "Doubtless, there is much beyond our horizon and reach for we who love Hawai'i. But that has never really discouraged our willingness to try and protect our 'āina and our communities, to maintain our peaceful resistance to the American empire. In the end, *The True Cost of the U.S. Military in Hawai'i* [report] is not so much an indictment as a blueprint for reclaiming our nation here, in hope and faith in one another." ■

## AN ANCESTOR UNDER FIRE

Continued from page 5



The decommissioned guided-missile frigate *USS Ingraham* (FFG-61) is bombarded during a live-fire SINKEX (Sinking Exercise) in Hawaiian waters in 2021. The ship was sunk by joint forces using various weapons including missiles fired by ships and aircraft.

found on O'ahu at the Army's Kahuku Training Area) and the coconut rhinoceros beetle (first discovered at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam).

RIMPAC's influx of naval vessels and planned underwater training exercises carry the risk of introducing or spreading aquatic invasive species as well.

Even with guidelines to reduce the risk of invasive species introductions from vessel ballast water and biofouling – the source of 80% of our aquatic invasive species – the extent to which visiting warships will comply with these safeguards is unclear.

Significantly increased vessel traffic and underwater detonation exercises may also contribute to the spread of the current octocoral infestation in Pu'uloa. These reef-smothering soft corals already cover a 100-acre area and led to the shutdown of fishing and kayaking at Pearl Harbor due to the ease in which they can spread through fragmentation.

Should octocoral fragments escape the harbor mouth, the consequences for our coral ecosystems could be devastating.

**Climate change impacts:** Climate destabilization remains the greatest threat to our oceans. Yet the U.S. – the world's largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels – continues to expand its impact through exercises like RIMPAC, reinforcing a cycle of military expansion among allies and rivals that accelerates the climate crisis.

These examples capture only a fraction of the impacts that RIMPAC and other military exercises may have on the ocean – an ancestor, caretaker, and the source of life for all living things.

The prevailing military narrative frames these harms as "necessary" for America's "national security." However, our pilina and kuleana to the ocean require a fuller accounting of their consequences for our ancestors, 'āina, and future generations. ■

*The authors wish to thank Rebecca Holloway and Dan Rempala for their research assistance.*

*Wayne Chung Tanaka is the executive director of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i and a former public policy manager with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Lenei Naipo, a kupa of Waimānalo, is a law student and a summer law clerk with Earthjustice whose work focuses on environmental and restorative justice for Kānaka Maoli.*

# Seattle Artist Reclaims Culture Through Kapa Making

By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

**M**alia Peoples, 45, has never shied away from being her own person.

Growing up in Olympia, Washington, during the days of grunge and riot grrrl (a 1990s underground feminist punk movement), Peoples recognized that she stood out from the homogeneity of the local Caucasian community. In second grade, a young Peoples wrote: "I look different than everybody else here."

But "I didn't try to, like, hide or shrink myself," the Seattleite added. Instead, Peoples has consistently embraced her differences – a quality that has furthered her time and again as an artist, a student and a teacher.

"I've lived a lot of life somehow," she said.

Born in 1980, Peoples is the descendant of Oregon loggers and farmers on her father's side and Kānaka Maoli and Hakka Chinese on her mother's side. Her mom, Harriet Kaholokula, met her dad, Philip Peoples, as students at Central Washington University.

Peoples is the youngest of three and the only daughter. Though her parents lived on the continent, a hāpai Kaholokula flew to Hawai'i with the hopes of giving birth to Peoples on the 'āina. "For her, it was very important that we were all born there as Hawaiians," Peoples said.

But Peoples entered the world on her own time in Yuba City, California. Her 'ohana resettled in Olympia when she was 3 years old. Her parents sold the trailer park they owned and managed, then they bought several ice cream stores, running Baskin-Robbins locations in Washington State from Tacoma to Centralia. Peoples remembers helping decorate the iconic clown cones.

In kindergarten, Peoples was asked what name she wanted to be called. She answered with her inoa Hawai'i, Malia. "I always knew that I was a Hawaiian person," she said.

Peoples was a keiki of many passions. She once dreamed of being a choreographer because she loved to dance and took ballet for many years. She played piano and saxophone in the band and nurtured a budding interest in languages.

At Capital High School in Olympia, Peoples felt that she knew everyone, and everyone knew her. She sported combat boots and dyed her hair blue, orange and purple. Peoples frequented thrift stores and was enamored with Japanese street fashion.

"I was, like, this weird Pacific Northwest Kanaka punk," she said.

After meeting a Chinese teacher through an exchange program, Peoples took a few trimesters of Mandarin and was extended the opportunity to attend Tsinghua University in Beijing.

She graduated high school in 1998, and, one week after turning 18, she was off to China. Peoples called it "life changing." Over a year and a half, she traveled and learned more about her ancestors from southern China. Peoples completed a program at the Beijing Language



Malia Peoples - Courtesy Photo

and Culture University.

At the dawn of the Y2K era, she enrolled at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Freshly returned from China, Peoples felt culture shock in reverse.

She moved on to Seattle Central College before transferring to the University of Washington as a junior. She graduated in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in Chinese language and literature.

Her goal: To work as an interpreter.

Peoples headed to New York City for an internship at China Labor Watch, a nonprofit that reports on labor conditions at Chinese factories. She split her time between the Manhattan office and her residence in the Queens neighborhood of Flushing. Peoples translated documents smuggled out of China into English.

"Through that whole experience, I started to realize how harmful production was to workers overseas," she said.

It prompted her decision to go to New York Fashion Academy in Seattle. She learned how to operate a sewing

machine, make patterns and other skills. Peoples finished the program with a certificate in fashion design and construction in 2007.

She stayed to teach sewing, pattern making, grading and product development for 8 years. Peoples also served as a teaching artist at the Seattle Art Museum, Atlas Obscura and the Seattle Public Library, as well as a sewing and ceramics teacher at The Northwest School's summer program. Peoples has also worked with the Seattle Housing Authority to teach refugees how to sew and repair clothing.

"I'm not trying to gatekeep knowledge," she said. "I'm trying to share it as much as possible."

In 2011, she launched her brand, Other Peoples Polyester, a line of clothing and accessories made of vintage, reclaimed and designer fabrics. Two years later, she got her own workspace studio in the Belltown neighborhood.

Feeling burnt out from clothes, in 2018 Peoples branched out to explore porcelain jewelry-making.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she was drawn to learn more about her Kanaka roots – particularly through kapa making. She received a grant to travel to O'ahu and learn kapa. While Peoples doesn't have a kumu yet, she's sat with several expert practitioners.

"I have learned about the process of turning a tree into fabric, but I've also learned a lot more about our ancestors," she said. "All these doors to 'ike just started opening up."

Peoples is reclaiming aspects of culture through art, which leaves her feeling excited and empowered. Now, she's moving full steam ahead.

Peoples recently received a grant to film a documentary about kapa. She's wrapping up her Hummingbird Indigenous Pasifika Storytelling Artist Residency and finishing art projects. She's part of a Moloka'i-based 'oli group that learns chants together online. On top of that, Peoples continues to model for TCM Models and Talent.

As Hawaiians, "we should, as people, be so, so proud of the fact that the 5% who survived are still here," Peoples said. "It's a good time to be Kānaka today." ■

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# Nā Holomoana: We Are Voyagers Still

By Herman Pi'ikea Clark

We are not waves. A wave is moved by forces outside itself, carried wherever the water pushes, spending itself on a shore it did not choose. Kānaka have never been that. We are the people who looked at the largest ocean on earth and chose to cross it - who read the stars and the swells and set out on purpose, carrying everything we were in the hull of a canoe. Hawai'i sits at the northern apex of Polynesia because our ancestors voyaged to reach it.

Movement is not something that happens to us. It is something we do, and have always done, and it is written into who we are.

I am one of the Hawaiians who left. I have spent much of my adult life away from the Islands - in Aotearoa and now in Canada - teaching, building programs, and mentoring young Indigenous scholars.

I know that for some at home, a Hawaiian who lives abroad can invite a quiet question: are they still truly one of us? I want to answer that question - not for myself alone, but for all of us who have gone out. The answer is older, and prouder, than the question.

Consider Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia. Born in Ka'ū around 1792 and orphaned young, he boarded a ship as a teenager and sailed all the way to Connecticut. There, far from any face that knew him, he hungered for learning and began the work of setting his own language down on paper. He longed to bring that learning home.

He never made it; typhus took him in 1818, at age 26. But his last words, spoken in a New England winter, were "Aloha 'oe" - my love be with you. His body lay in Cornwall for 175 years, until his people brought him home to Kona in 1993. One of the first of us to venture



Herman Pi'ikea Clark - Courtesy Photo

out carried Hawai'i within him to his final breath - and in the end, Hawai'i brought him home.

He was not the last. Through the 19th century, Kānaka shipped out aboard whaling and trading vessels and earned a reputation for being among the finest seamen afloat. Many settled along the Northwest Coast of the American continent, married into the Native nations there, and became beloved of them. They were called Kanaka - and they wore the name gladly. It stuck.

You can still find it written across the map, up and down the coast of British Columbia and inland: the

homeland, planted wherever our people came to rest. Generations later, their descendants still turned their faces toward Hawai'i. A people do not leave their name across a coastline because they have forgotten themselves. They do it because they carry home so completely that they leave a piece of it everywhere they land.

And we did not only sail outward on others' ships. We sent ourselves, deliberately, as a matter of national purpose.

Between 1880 and 1892, King Kalākaua and the Hawaiian Kingdom dispatched 18 young Hawaiians to study in six countries - Italy, Scotland, England, China, Japan, and the United States - in the program known as Hawaiian Youths Abroad.

They studied engineering, medicine, art, music, and military science, chosen to become the leaders of an independent nation. The going out was not exile; it was a commission from the crown. They were sent to gather the knowledge the lāhui needed - and to show the world that here was a nation of character, intellect, and talent, fit to stand among the nations of the earth. They were our representatives. We have never stopped sending them.

My own family is woven into this same current. My

father, Herman Pi'ikea Clark - whose name I carry - and his older brother, my uncle James Kalaeone Clark, both went from Punahou to Oregon State and into the National Football League.

My father, an all-pro guard for the Chicago Bears in 1955 and 1956, was later named to the NFL's Half-Century team. Decades after his passing he was inducted into the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame by a committee that knew him only by reputation. My uncle, a guard for the Washington Redskins, came home to serve his people in the Hawai'i Legislature.

My great-uncles Duke and Sam Kahanamoku stood on Olympic podiums, Duke with three gold medals among the five he won across three Games, the brothers sharing the stand together at Paris in 1924. They competed against the whole world and beat it. Duke lived many years on the West Coast and carried Hawai'i with him wherever he went, becoming the man who gave surfing to the world. Not one of them became a drop less Hawaiian for having gone.

Even our treasures have made this journey and kept their meaning. In Chicago, Kulamanu McWayne Nash - a woman of ali'i descent, connected by blood to Queen Lili'uokalani herself - kept the kāhili, the feathered royal standards of our chiefs, through a lifetime far from home.

She carried her lineage and her mana with her, held these treasures in trust across the years away, and in 1949 gave them onward, knowingly, as Hawaiian things. The mana traveled. It was held, honored, and passed on. That is not the story of a people losing themselves at a distance. It is the story of a people keeping faith across one.

I left for the same reason my ancestors did: because the work I was called to do required knowledge that, at the time, I could not pursue at home. Years ago, I made the first attempt to begin a Native Hawaiian art and design course at the University of Hawai'i - the first taught from an Indigenous Hawaiian perspective - and it took root, carried forward by others after me.

But the deeper questions I needed to ask reached beyond what the institution, as it then was, could hold. I looked to Canada, to Australia, to programs across the United States, and I came to a clear conclusion: the world leader in the indigenization of higher education and the decolonizing of arts education was Aotearoa.

I was fortunate to be invited to live and work there as an academic, and there, as a Kanaka Maoli scholar, I earned my doctorate - supported and encouraged to study from within my own knowledge system. I stayed 20 years. I did not leave Hawai'i behind. I went to fetch what Hawai'i had sent me for.

And I am in good and current company. Kānaka Maoli now hold some of the most distinguished posts in the world.

Kēhaulani Kauanui is the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Professor of Indigenous Studies at Princeton University. Noelani Arista directs the Indigenous Studies Program at McGill, one of Canada's finest universities, where she

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# Mural Depicts the Kumulipo and the Origin of Creation

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

A beautiful new mural representing the Hawaiian creation chant, *Kumulipo*, now graces the east-facing wall of the Waiakamilo Industrial Complex building on the corner of Nimitz Highway and Waiakamilo Road in Honolulu. The massive mural depicts images of the deep sea and invites reflection on creation itself.

The *Kumulipo* tells us that all life originates in the deep sea. The uku ko'ako'a, coral polyp, is the first living creature and its birth begins an unbroken genealogy that ends with humanity. For Hawaiians, therefore, our genealogy comes from the deep sea.

Significantly, the genealogy recorded in the *Kumulipo* has become a powerful instrument in the fight against deep-sea mining.

"The *Kumulipo* describes everything created in the vertical water column of the deep sea up to the nearshore reefs, onto the land, into the hills, and even taking flight. People are not created until millions and millions of years later, but when we do come into this honua, we have an inherent responsibility to be part of nature and therefore, our kuleana is to care for nature," explains cultural practitioner and international ocean advocate Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala.

"There is this idea of caring and receiving. I believe that this is what the *Kumulipo* intends for us to understand: if we care for the environment and for all things in nature of which we belong, then we, too, will be cared for."

Kaho'ohalahala is Hawai'i's foremost advocate working to stop deep-sea mining (DSM) before it begins. In

addition to the irreversible ecological damage to the ocean ecosystem that DSM represents, it is an assault on the Indigenous people of Oceania many of whom, like Native Hawaiians, trace their lineage and creation stories to the deep sea.

For four years, Kaho'ohalahala has taken his message of mālama honua to the United Nation's International Seabed Authority (ISA), pointing to the *Kumulipo* as a foundation for humanity's relationship to the natural world.

In 2022, Greenpeace, a global network of environmentalists, invited Kaho'ohalahala to utilize their platform as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the ISA. Since then, Greenpeace has partnered with Kaho'ohalahala to help ensure that Indigenous voices are represented in international deliberations on DSM at the ISA.

This is critically important since Hawai'i does not have standing at the UN as a sovereign nation state. In this international arena, it is presumed that the United States speaks for Native Hawaiians.

A recent hard-won victory in the fight to stop DSM is the UN's new "High Seas Treaty" which became international law on January 17, 2026 (see related article in the June issue of *Ka Wai Ola*). While the ISA governs the seabed floor, the High Seas Treaty governs the living ocean above it - a critical distinction that will factor into future deliberations around deep-sea mining.

To celebrate the High Seas Treaty, "Greenpeace had an idea to commission murals around the world," recounted Arlo Hemphill, Greenpeace U.S. project lead for its global Oceans for Life campaign. Greenpeace's campaign to elevate ocean awareness has resulted in dozens of murals on city walls in 13 countries on five continents.

"In his interventions to the United Nations, Uncle Sol regularly talks about the *Kumulipo* and uses it as an illustration that deep-sea mining is not just an environmental issue. It is a cultural issue. Deep-sea mining attacks the very place of creation of the people who live in the region," Hemphill said.

When Greenpeace first approached Kaho'ohalahala in January, their idea was to paint a mural depicting the *Kumulipo* in New York City where it would be visible to the international states housed at the UN General Assembly. But it was the middle of winter and freezing, so they pivoted and decided to site the mural in Hawai'i instead which all parties agreed felt right.

Finding a location was next. Kaho'ohalahala reached out to Kamehameha Schools (KS) and they were excited to support the project. KS offered the building on Waikamilo Road that serves as the "canvas" for the mural and provided the paint and other supplies.

"This mural offers a powerful lens for understanding who we are as a people and our relationship to our 'āina," explained Kamuela Cobb-Adams, managing director at Ke Kula 'o Kamehameha on behalf of the schools.

"It reflects our commitment to caring for our oceans and lands by ensuring our kaiāulu (community) can learn about and deepen their connection to our mo'okūauhau (genealogy), while inspiring stewardship of 'āina in ways that sustain future generations."

Artist Kai'ili Kaulukukui was invited to paint the mural. "We had met Kai early on and really wanted to work with him," Hemphill recalled. Greenpeace commissioned Kaulukukui and paid for his work.

SEE MURAL DEPICTS KUMULIPO ON PAGE 11



A new mural representing the deep sea as described in the Hawaiian creation chant, *Kumulipo*, graces the east-facing wall of the Waiakamilo Industrial Complex building on the corner of Nimitz Highway and Waiakamilo Road in Honolulu. The project was a collaboration between Greenpeace, Kamehameha Schools, and Native Hawaiian kia'i opposed to deep-sea mining - an emerging ecological catastrophe for Pacific Islanders. - Photo: Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

# A Letter to the Lāhui

By Kamanamaikalani Beamer, PhD

Wēlina mai ke aloha i ka ‘āina. In March, my appointment as the incoming Dean of Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge (HSHK) was finalized. It’s difficult for me to express the magnitude of this significant moment and the kuleana of becoming the next dean of Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge. Let me start by saying I am deeply in love with our school.

Hawai‘inuiākea has bettered the lives of so many ‘ohana, community, haumāna, and ‘āina in ways that I believe will be generationally transformative. Hawai‘inuiākea is truly a momi (jewel) – it is a vessel that can be like a hulu kupuna (beloved elder) for our people for all time. All our faculty, staff, and community partners have played a critical role in this hana ko‘iko‘i (urgent work).

Hawai‘inuiākea is unique and vital to the overall suc-



Kamanamaikalani Beamer, PhD  
- Courtesy Photo

cess of our lāhui – the ea (sovereignty) of our ‘āina, the ola (health) of our ‘ōlelo, and the education of the nation. We are like the ‘ōhi‘a seedling birthed in the ‘ā‘ā after struggle. Every lālā (branch) of our school is critical to our overall success and I intend to serve each of us as we ulu (increase) toward new and formative outgrowths. So that one day there will be a forest of Hawai‘inuiākea.

I am piha with mahalo (filled with gratitude) to the selection committee and all of you who contributed to the process that led to this moment. I am incredibly honored to follow former deans Maenette Benham and Jonathan Osorio to become the third dean of Hawai‘inuiākea, and the first dean to hold

a degree from one of our programs. I believe that even in these incredibly challenging times when many of our efforts and the hana ko‘iko‘i of generations are under assault, if we kūlike (stand together), if we can recall the magneti o ke aloha ‘āina (magnetic pull in the heart of the patriot), we will emerge from the hihia

(difficulty) stronger, with greater clarity and resolve, me ka wiwo‘ole (with fearlessness).

I believe a critical part of ea in these times can be achieved by creating the most highly functional organization possible within the confines of the structures in which we are embedded. So that one day the generations will look back at these vile times, when our ali‘i trusts were under assault and our aquifers were poisoned with jet fuel, and not wallow in sorrow but stand proudly because those who were living through these times, i kēia au nei, stood together with the strength and sentiments of those who came before us.

I know that great things are to come for Hawaiian education, ‘āina, and community if we can kūkahi (stand together) for what is pono.

Students and their parents are now making decisions on college attendance. The decision on where to attend college is one of the most special and significant choices for ‘ohana. I want you to know that Hawai‘inuiākea is a place for you. We have a record of nurturing and challenging haumāna to understand tools for accessing ‘ike Hawai‘i that have grounded and enriched the development of thousands of our students, many of which can

SEE A LETTER TO THE LĀHUI ON PAGE 11

# Kuleana grows leaders

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LEARN MORE

Kamehameha Schools' admissions policy is to give preference to applicants of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law.

Ke Kula ‘o Kamehameha

## NĀ HOLOMOANA

Continued from page 8

organizes Hawaiian knowledge for a new century. The baritone Quinn Kamakanalani Kelsey based in Chicago is the premier Verdi baritone of his generation; he has sung the title role in Verdi's *Rigoletto* on the great stages of the world, and not long ago came home to sing in 'ōlelo Hawai'i. I had the privilege of sitting in the audience in Toronto for his *Rigoletto*, swept up and overawed by the power and presence of that Hawaiian voice filling the hall.

These are not disconnected Hawaiians. They are among our finest - our leading minds and voices in the very fields of our excellence, representing the lāhui on the world's largest stages.

This is why I believe we should think differently about our diaspora. With more Hawaiians now living away from the Islands than within them, the old anxiety - that to leave is to fade - has things exactly backward.

We are not refugees, scattered and diminished. We are voyagers and carriers, doing what we have always done: going out into the world and bringing our culture, our kūpuna, and our way of seeing with us, as a gift we give wherever we land.

Our diaspora is not a weakness to be explained away. It is an exemplar of our strength, our resilience, and our continuing excellence proven, as it has been for two centuries, in open competition on the world stage.

So, when someone asks whether a Hawaiian who lives abroad is still truly Hawaiian, I think of 'Ōpūkaha'ia with aloha on his lips in the Connecticut cold, and of the seamen who left our names along a far coastline, and of Kalākaua's young scholars sent out to announce a nation. I think of a king who understood that to love your country can mean crossing an ocean for it.

We have always gone out. We have always carried home with us. And like 'Ōpūkaha'ia, in the ways that matter most, we always find our way back. We are voyagers still. ■

## MURAL DEPICTS KUMULIPO

Continued from page 9

Born on Hawai'i Island, Kaulukukui cannot remember a time that he did not draw. Since 2012 he has worked as an artist full-time and has painted numerous murals. He also does a lot of ocean-themed art, so when he was asked to paint a mural depicting the origin of life in the deep sea as described in the *Kumulipo*, he didn't hesitate.

"I'm super honored to be involved in this project," said Kaulukukui who was already aware of the cultural and ecological danger that deep-sea mining poses to Oceania - and that proponents of DSM want to begin mining for rare metals in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone which is located just 500 miles south of Hawai'i Island.

He approached the project by reading and reflecting on the *Kumulipo* and by having long talks with Kaho'ohalahala. "I'd draw up a couple ideas then go to sleep and dream on it," he said. "Through my dreams I'll come up with a composition that I feel is strong. I think I did maybe 28 designs for this mural."

Kaulukukui said that his last design "kind of just jumped out and I knew that was it." He presented the design to Kaho'ohalahala and Greenpeace and they agreed. He began painting the mural in late May and finished in mid-June. In all it took him 11 days, working about 16 hours each day with help color-blocking from his wife, Angela.



L-R: Greenpeace U.S. Project Lead for its global Oceans for Life campaign Arlo Hemphill; mural project manager Angela Arvai (and partner to Kai); mural artist Kai'i Kaulukukui; Mana Moana founder and astrophysicist Dr. Brittany Lehua Kama'i; Maui Nui Makai Network Director and Co-Founder 'Eku Lindsey; cultural practitioner, knowledge keeper and international ocean advocate Solomon Pili Kaho'ohalahala; and Greenpeace U.S.A. Major Gifts Officer Carlos Prieto De-Leon celebrate the completion of a new mural in Honolulu which depicts the deep sea as the source of life on Earth. The mural is an act of defiance against the aggressive push by the U.S., China, Japan, Norway and specialized mining corporations to strip-mine the seabed floor in search of rare metals. - Photo: Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

His vision of the deep sea is based on the first wā (section) of the *Kumulipo*. "I included 14 of the creatures from the first 19 verses, like the primordial slime and phytoplankton and coral polyp," he said.

Barely visible in the bottom left corner of the mural is an image of Queen Lili'uokalani who translated the *Kumulipo* into English during her imprisonment following the 1893 overthrow. At the upper right corner are the words, "Hānau ka 'uku ko'ako'a" (born is the coral polyp) from the 15th verse of the *Kumulipo*.

"Being able to represent this stuff visually is awesome, but it's the work that these scientists and people like Uncle Sol are doing - trying to get laws to change - that is making the difference," Kaulukukui said.

"Most people have never heard of the Clarion-Clipperton Zone and when I talk about the mural, 95% of the people don't have any idea of this issue [deep-sea mining]. I would love it if this [mural] helps get more eyes on what is happening."

"We are at a really dangerous moment in time where the Trump administration is trying to force through deep-sea mining, both in U.S. and international waters, in defiance of international law," Hemphill warned.

"The Trump administration is trying to say that, rather than the UN, they are the regulator of deep-sea mining in the international seabed - a position no other country agrees with. This mural is a symbol of defiance against that. And a symbol of Hawaiian

connection to the ocean as a sacred place of creation that needs to be kept off limits to destructive industrial activity."

"We know very little about the deep sea," adds Kaho'ohalahala. "I'm hoping that, with the combination of science, research and a cultural perspective like ours, people around the world can support the idea that we should allow things that are created in nature to continue - rather than destroy them before we understand them."

"We [Hawai'i] need to be aware of what is happening around us; what is already happening just beyond the horizon. That is the urgency I feel." ■

## A LETTER TO THE LĀHUI

Continued from page 10

be seen as leaders serving communities across our islands.

Our faculty are incredibly multidisciplinary and bring their wealth of knowledge and experience into the classroom with courses that range from Hawaiian genealogies to mahi'ai kalo (taro farming). Some are on the 'āina in field schools that advance Hawaiian geography, marine resource management, archaeology, and food sovereignty. Others teach through immersive experiences in 'ōlelo, mele, and in the performing arts.

We have an entire center focused on supporting 'Ōiwi student success and enrichment and even an immersive international exchange experience with "Hawaiian Youths Abroad," that has enriched the education of our students, enabling them to experience places such as Japan, London, Paris, Tahiti, and more.

But what really makes us unique is the relentless commitment toward a better and more just future for our 'āina and community.

I believe we are the best place to nurture haumāna to make a positive difference for our islands that is rooted in ancestral knowledge while moving toward pono and ea. We have a mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) that links us to some of our island's most important researchers, scholars, and change-agents, and a dedication toward Hawai'i's future, a hiki i ke aloha 'āina hope loa. ■

*For those that would like to know more about Dr. Kamana Beamer and his work to date visit [kamanabeamer.com](http://kamanabeamer.com). Learn more about Hawai'i inuiākea at [manoa.hawaii.edu/hshk](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hshk)*

# Budgeting Erasure: Defending Our Ea and Political Status

By Elizabeth Ho'oipo Kalaena'auao Pa Nakea, Esq.

Our lāhui is once again under direct assault. The proposed FY2027 federal budget is the most sweeping and aggressive attempt to dismantle Native Hawaiian programs since *Rice v. Cayetano* (2000), when the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated Hawaiian-only voting for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).

Far beyond a fiscal adjustment, this staggering \$1.36 billion cut is a calculated maneuver to starve the resources sustaining our families and erase our political identity.

## The Blueprint of Erasure

The roots of today's attacks lie with the missionary descendants who orchestrated the 1893 overthrow. Desperate to protect their sugar profits and suppress Queen Lili'uokalani's constitution, this oligarchy manufactured a moral panic, smearing a sovereign monarch to disguise an illegal coup.

The blueprint was set: Invent a false narrative to justify a theft.

That 1893 blueprint never disappeared; it simply changed vocabulary. For over a century, this apparatus has weaponized U.S. law to maintain settler colonial control – beginning with the 1896 outlawing of 'ōlelo Hawai'i and the criminalization of hula.

Today, this false narrative relies on hijacked “civil rights” language. By seeking to reclassify Kānaka Maoli as a “domestic racial group,” the government manufactures a legal loophole to use civil rights laws against us, framing resource theft as a pursuit of equality.

The June 2026 lawsuit, *Ryan v. Watson*, already weaponizes the 14th Amendment to dismantle the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, falsely framing our political trust rights as “racial discrimination.” Under this guise of “equality,” the calculated maneuver does not just cut “social programs” – it starves the mandatory trust pipelines that satisfy a federal fiduciary debt and protect our vested property rights.

By designating us a “racial group,” the administration legally locks Native Hawaiian health centers out of federal block grants, putting \$27 million at risk.

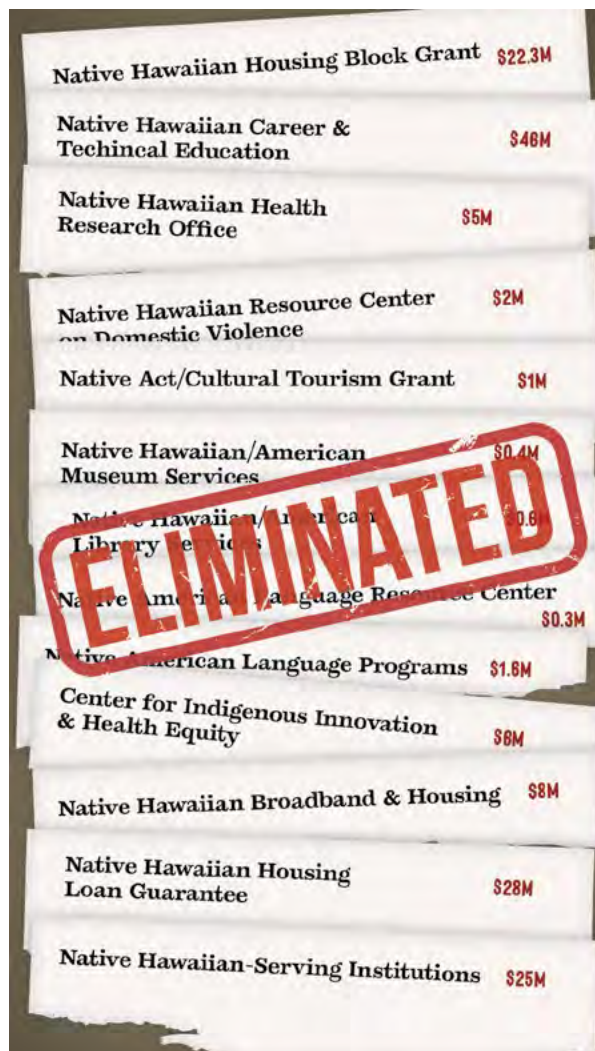
Our educational foundation remains similarly targeted: although a fragile, one-year reprieve was just secured for the \$46 million Native Hawaiian Education Program (NHEP), the budget still zeros out \$25 million for Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, and \$3.6 million for Career & Technical Education.

This mirrors the exact theories weaponized against Kamehameha Schools and OHA.

## The Human Cost: Exiled in Our Homelands

The most visible failure of this settler-colonial system is the severe housing crisis, forcing Kānaka 'Ōiwi onto the streets of their ancestral lands.

Instead of fulfilling its century-old Hawaiian Homes



Commission Act obligations – where 29,000 languish, untold thousands have died waiting, and the Ryan lawsuit seeks to open leases to non-Hawaiians – the budget eliminates the \$22.3 million Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant (NAHASDA), freezing development.

Slashes to the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) starve nonprofits, accelerating our people's coercive departure to the continent.

This assault collapses the safety net for our beneficiaries. The sheer scale of this erasure is evident in the defunding of critical programs: slashing SNAP/Food Stamps (\$221 million) and Medicaid (\$360 million) ensures keiki go hungry and treatable illnesses become emergencies.

Essential lifelines face total elimination, including civil legal aid (\$3.8 million), LIHEAP/utilities (\$7.7 million), broadband (\$8 million), Job Corps (\$30 million), health screenings (\$1.8 million), and education grants (\$8 million).

Furthermore, an 82% cut to Clean Water funds costs working-poor families \$2,100 each. Most distressingly, a \$150 million FEMA cut threatens Lahaina's rebuilding,

leaving the 'āina vulnerable to outside land-grabs, while a 40% cut to the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations suffocates our capacity to self-advocate.

## The Glaring Disparity: Domestic Slashes vs. Military Increases

This budget deliberately transfers wealth from our safety nets into the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, slashing domestic spending by \$1.36 billion while surging military funding by \$2 billion. As 65-year leases expire, the military is digging in – preparing to use eminent domain to seize our national lands, stripping our survival funding to finance their permanent occupation.

## Navigating the Sovereignty Trap

We operate as the rightful stewards of our national estate, guided by patriot Joseph Nāwahī: “We are a nation; we have not lost our nationality.”

Because the United States never acquired Hawai'i through a lawful international mechanism – that is, no treaty of annexation was ever ratified – seeking “federal recognition” as a Native American tribe is a dangerous trap.

Under the Constitution's “Commerce Clause,” Congress exercises plenary power over recognized tribes, allowing it to legally cut off funding with a single vote, which is exactly what it is attempting now. Accepting this false compromise trades our unrelinquished ea (sovereignty) for a fragile protectorate status they can unilaterally revoke. It is a calculated step toward total erasure, forcing us to abandon our international standing.

## Holding the Line

The true danger of the U.S. courts is exemplified by Justice Samuel Alito's 2009 Supreme Court ruling (*Hawaii v. OHA*). Alito gutted the 1993 Apology Law by dismissing its recognition of our national sovereignty as merely “conciliatory” words, establishing the exact blueprint now being used to defund us: weaponizing courts to neutralize Hawaiian protections without addressing the underlying crime.

We are watching this predatory playbook unfold.

In January 2025, the Interior Department issued legal opinion M-37083, explicitly confirming an “ongoing political relationship with Native Hawaiians manifested in hundreds of federal statutes.”

Today, driven by Project 2025, political operatives like Ed Blum and the Pacific Legal Foundation are backing *Ryan v. Watson*, and the administration is aggressively attempting to revoke this document.

They are burying their own legal admission, falsely reducing our political nationhood to a “racial group” as a pretext to defund the \$1.36 billion protecting our vested property interests.

By erasing this distinction, they strip our ability to

## BUDGETING ERASURE

Continued from page 12

claim fiduciary damages owed for over a century of occupation, stealing our future to fund current wars.

Our ali'i did not build a charity. Our leaders voluntarily relinquished absolute power to secure the people's rights and build a progressive constitutional monarchy. We were overthrown because our peaceful sovereignty threatened what American businessmen desperately coveted: our 'āina momona – our abundant lands – and our advantageous geographic location.

We are being defunded today because our continued existence threatens their occupation.

As Queen Lili'uokalani declared, "The cause of Hawai'i and independence is larger and dearer than the life of any man connected with it." Her words remain our sovereign mandate to fiercely protect our 'āina, our wai, and our kai.

Our ea is not a domestic racial preference; it is not a charitable gift, and it is not up for negotiation. It is our unbroken legal and ancestral inheritance. ■

*Elizabeth Ann Ho'oipo Kalae-na'auao Pa Nakea, Esq., has spent her career contributing to the collective work of Kanaka 'Ōiwi Ea through education and law. Formerly the executive director of the Native Hawaiian Advisory Council and president of Hui Na'auao, she continues her lifelong advocacy for our lāhui's ea and the protection of our 'āina, wai, and kai. A Kamehameha and Richardson Law graduate, Elizabeth grew up across Liliha, Kāne'ohe Bay, and Kalihiwai Bay.*

## Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea - Our First National Holiday

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

When Kamehameha III became king in 1825 he was just 11 years old. It was a time of change and social upheaval in the Hawaiian Kingdom.

When the young king began his reign, Native Hawaiians numbered just 150,000 – the Indigenous population already decimated by more than 80% as entire families and communities succumbed to a relentless onslaught of foreign diseases in the 50 years after Westerners arrived on our shores. And it would only get worse during his lifetime.

Politically and economically, foreign influence was also taking hold in the kingdom. Whalers, traders, fortune-seekers and missionaries descended on the Islands – many of them staying.

Businessmen, primarily from America and Europe, convinced of their own cultural, racial and religious superiority, often married Hawaiian women from the nobility and, in doing so, gained social, political and economic capital within the kingdom.

Against this backdrop, and while still in his mid-20s, King Kamehameha III developed the Hawaiian Kingdom's first formal written laws with help from his trusted advisor, Hoapili, and former missionary William Richards. His first act was a declaration of human rights in 1839. He then enacted the Constitution of 1840 – the kingdom's first.

Increasingly concerned about threats to the kingdom by foreign powers, in 1842 Kamehameha III commissioned three men – his close friend Timoteo Ha'alilio, Scottish businessman Sir George Simpson, and Richards – to travel to Washington, D.C., and Europe to secure formal recognition of Hawaiian independence from these dominant colonial powers.

The men departed Hawai'i in July 1842. Simpson traveling to Europe via Alaska and Siberia, while Ha'alilio and Richards traveled to Washington, D.C., by way of Mexico. The three planned to meet in London.

Kamehameha III's instincts were astute. In February 1843, while Ha'alilio and Richards were on route from Washington, D.C., to London, British Captain Lord George Paulet arrived in Honolulu and, without authority, exercised "gunboat diplomacy" and forced the king to surrender to the British crown.

Paulet was acting on a report by Richard Charlton, the British consul to the Kingdom of Hawai'i, that British subjects in Hawai'i were being denied their legal rights. Receiving permission from Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas to investigate, Paulet sailed to Hawai'i.



Illustration by Nikila Badua, lahoihoiea.org

Upon arriving in Honolulu, he demanded to meet with the king. When he was not immediately granted an audience, a humiliated and outraged Paulet went rogue and threatened an attack on Honolulu.

Outgunned, Kamehameha III surrendered. Paulet appointed himself and three others to govern Hawai'i, burned every Hawaiian flag he could find, and raised the British Union Jack over Honolulu.

Both Paulet and the king immediately sent envoys to London to present their respective cases: Paulet to justify his actions, and the king to press for sovereignty. For five months Hawai'i languished under Paulet's rule.

When Great Britain's Queen Victoria learned what had transpired, she quickly dispatched Rear-Admiral Thomas to Honolulu.

Upon arriving on July 26, 1843, Thomas met with the king and very quickly concluded that the British consul's allegations were unsubstantiated. On July 31, 1843, Thomas declared that the British occupation of Hawai'i was over and that Hawaiian sovereignty was to be respected.

A public ceremony was held at what is now Thomas Square in Honolulu on South King Street. Thousands of Hawaiian citizens, of all ethnicities, gathered to watch as the British Union Jack was lowered, cheering as the Hae Hawai'i was raised once again, symbolizing the restoration of sovereignty to Hawai'i.

This event became the first national holiday of the Hawaiian Kingdom. It was called Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea – Sovereignty Restoration Day – and it was on this occasion that Kamehameha III proclaimed, "Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono" (the sovereignty of the nation is restored by righteousness).

Four months later, Ha'alilio, Richards and Simpson were successful in securing global recognition of Hawai'i's sovereignty. On November 28, 1843, Great Britain and France signed a proclamation recognizing the Hawaiian Kingdom as a sovereign state. This became the second national holiday of the Hawaiian Kingdom: Lā Kū'oko'a - Independence Day - observed on November 28.

Both holidays were celebrated annually throughout the kingdom until the 1893 overthrow.

Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea celebrations were revived in Hawai'i almost 40 years ago. The late Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell and the late Henry Welokīheiakea'eloa "Soli" Niheu, are credited with restoring the holiday at Thomas Square in 1987.

In 2022, the State of Hawai'i passed legislation officially designating July 31 as Lā Ho'ihō'i Ea – Sovereignty Restoration Day. While not a paid state holiday, it does help to advance awareness of our Hawaiian history. ■

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# 2026 PRIMARY ELECTION UPDATES

By Kelli Meskin Soileau

**L**ater this month, registered Hawai'i voters will begin receiving their mail-in ballots, and we strongly encourage all residents who can vote, to vote. Voting is a tool in our political toolkit that too many choose not to utilize – whether it's because they are disillusioned, angry, or just too busy surviving.

However, if we want to see positive change in our community, one of the most powerful ways we can make this happen is by showing up, casting our ballots, and voting individuals of character into office who will represent the people and communities they serve with transparency and integrity.

If you have not already registered to vote, there is still time. Legal residents, 18 years or older, can register to vote right up to Election Day (August 8 for the primary).

Voting is one way to show that we care about our community and our 'āina – and it is the only way that we can make sure that the people who are making the laws that govern Hawai'i are representing the needs and concerns of regular people – not just the wealthy, special interest groups, or lobbyists.

## STRONG NATIVE HAWAIIAN REPRESENTATION IN THIS YEAR'S ELECTION

Over 300 candidates filed to run in the 2026 Hawai'i election, and this year, representation from the Native Hawaiian community is impressive. A third of the all the candidates, about 90 individuals, identify as Native Hawaiian. Some are first time candidates younger than 40, who are leaders in their respective communities.

Of special note is the emergence this year of a new coalition called Moho 'Āina which has adopted a standard of Hawaiian values and practices for Hawai'i politicians. It is not a political party but a hui of 13 political candidates.

Moho is a political candidate or representative, and 'āina is the land or that which feeds. The members refer to themselves as moho 'āina – candidates who have drafted strategies to make Hawai'i better in areas of education, housing, aloha 'āina, agriculture, keiki and kūpuna care, healthcare and in the economy.

Some of their general objectives include decreasing the DHHL blood quantum requirement, demilitarization, changing place names (like Hawai'i Kai or Pearl City) back to their original names, reducing violence in communities, and reducing traffic fatalities. All of these issues have been raised before in politics but have only seen incremental – or no – improvements.

Nā Hoa Moho 'Āina (friends of Moho 'Āina), are a group of 11 additional candidates, some Native Hawaiian and some not, who align with the hui's objectives and actions.

You can learn more about these candidates, and their objectives and values, at [mohoaina.com](http://mohoaina.com).

## OHA TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

The following is a summary of Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Board of Trustee candidates. This is a prelude to a more comprehensive OHA Board of Trustees Candidate Survey that will be published in the August issue of *Ka Wai Ola* (circulated the last week of July) just ahead of the Primary Election.

This year, OHA has five trustee seats up for election: three At-Large seats, the Maui seat and the O'ahu seat. The At-Large race is especially competitive, with 15 candidates (including all three incumbents) contending for the three seats.

Voters in the primary election will narrow the list down to six names for the general election ballot. The Maui and O'ahu races will not be on the primary election ballot as there are only two candidates for each seat. These races will be decided in the General Election.

Below is a list of the candidates with some of the information that we could find about them online.

### At-Large Trustee Candidates

#### Adrian (Keali'i) Akina

Based on Hawai'i Island, he is an IT Resource Teacher. His name is very similar to that of current OHA At-Large Trustee (William Keali'i Akina) who is based on O'ahu and is not up for election this year.

#### Ikaika Anderson

Based on O'ahu, he is a former Honolulu City Council member, was a 2022 candidate for Lt. Gov., and was nominated by Gov. Josh Green in 2022 as DHHL chair but later withdrew after rejection by the Senate Hawaiian Affairs Committee.

#### Karl Veto Baker

Based on O'ahu, he is a kumu hula and musician, the CEO of Kuilei Consulting Inc., a development and consulting firm that has assisted OHA on prior projects, and has 38 years of experience as a mortgage banker.

#### Shelby Pikachu Billionaire

Based on O'ahu, he is a video producer who covers community gatherings and a community advocate for the Wai'anae Moku Kūpuna Council. He is often seen wearing sunglasses with the Pokemon character Pikachu on them.

#### Jackie Kaho'okele Burke

Based on O'ahu, she is an entrepreneur, artist, jewelry maker, musician, and consultant-planner. She is a member of the Kalihi-Pālana Hawaiian Civic Club and the Hawaiian Community Development Board.

#### Michelle (Mikala) Costello

No information available online.

#### Kanekoa (Koa) Crabbe

Based on O'ahu, he is a self-employed subsistence fisherman and boat builder, and the vice chairperson of the Kaka'ako Makai Community Planning Advisory Council with the Hawai'i Community Development Authority.

#### Brickwood Galuteria

Based on O'ahu, he is a former Hawai'i State Senator (2008 – 2018), musician, recording artist, and the executive producer and host of the "Kūpuna Power" program. He is an incumbent who was elected as an OHA At-Large trustee in 2022.

#### Clifford K. Kauaula

No information available online.

#### Brendon Kalei'aina Lee

Based on O'ahu, he is a former OHA At-Large Trustee (2018 – 2022), a retired professional surfer, advocate for Native Hawaiian issues, member of the Pearl Harbor Hawaiian Civic Club and former president of the Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association.

#### Philip (Kawika) Martin

No information available online.

#### R. Kūnani Nihipali Sr.

Based on Moloka'i, he is a long-time community organizer who has held numerous leadership roles. He has been a grant writer, project director, educator, delegate and fundraiser. A retired police officer, he now farms to reestablish food and water security on Moloka'i.

#### Kalena A. Parish

Based on O'ahu, she is an award-winning, musician, executive director of the Kapena School of Music, president of the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts, a board member of the Hawai'i Songwriting Festival, and a real estate agent.

### Keoni Souza

Based on O‘ahu, he is an award-winning musician, a member of the Hawaiian musical group Nā Hoa, and a real estate agent. He is an incumbent who was elected as an OHA At-Large trustee in 2022.

### John Waihe‘e IV

Based on Oahu, he is the son of former Gov. John Waihe‘e. He has served on the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission and the Native Hawaiian Historic Preservation Council. He is an incumbent who was elected as an OHA At-Large trustee in 2000.

## Maui Trustee Candidates

### Ke‘eumoku Kapu

Based on Maui, he is the president of Nā ‘Aikane o Maui, a community resource for the history of Lahaina, land title research, and traditional practices. He assists with cultural monitoring, Island Burial Councils and organized recovery efforts after the Lahaina fire.

### Carmen “Hulu” Lindsey

Based on Maui, she is an award-winning recording artist, real estate broker, member of ‘Ahahui Ka‘ahumanu, and the Central Maui Hawaiian Civic Club. She is the incumbent and was elected as the OHA Maui trustee in 2012.

## O‘ahu Trustee Candidates

### Kalei Akaka

Based on O‘ahu, she is a granddaughter of the late U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Akaka. She has been a legislative researcher and aide, and previously worked in the middle school office at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. She is the incumbent and was elected as the OHA O‘ahu trustee in 2018.

### Hinaleimoana Wong

Based on O‘ahu, she is known in the community as “Kumu Hina.” She is the cultural ambassador for the Hawaiian Council, a cultural practitioner, kumu hula, teacher, researcher, writer, filmmaker, and advocate for Hawaiian language, cultural preservation, and māhū.

OHA will be hosting Board of Trustee candidate panels later in the election season to help voters make informed decisions about whom they want to vote for. Details will be available online or you can sign up to receive email announcements at [oha.org/stay-connected](http://oha.org/stay-connected).

## HOT PRIMARY RACES COMING TO YOUR DISTRICT

Some races will be determined by the Primary Election this year. The two hot races are for the congressional D-2 and Lt. Governor seats in the August Primary Election.

While there are a number of candidates running for the congressional D-2 race, the two fore-runners – and best-known contenders – are both running as democrats so only one will advance to the General Election ballot. Those candidates are incumbent U.S. Rep. Ed Case and challenger State Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole.

This year’s lieutenant governor race is wide open, as Sylvia Luke is on indefinite leave and will not be seeking reelection. Among the candidates vying for the position are two particularly strong, experienced individuals both of whom are running as democrats: State Rep. Della Au Belatti and Kaua‘i Mayor Derek Kawakami.

In addition, there are a handful of state representative and senate seats where the winners will be decided in the Primary Election because the candidates are running in the same party. If you live in any of these districts, be sure to vote in the primary so your choice will be counted. If you wait until the General Election, your preferred candidate may not even be on the ballot.

### State Senator District 10

(Kaimukī, Kapahulu, Mō‘ili‘ili)

- Les Ihara Jr. **D** (Incumbent)
- Jackson Sayama **D**

### State Senator District 14

(Moanalua, ‘Aiea, Fort Shafter)

- Donna Mercado Kim **D** (Incumbent)
- Christy Kikue MacPherson **D**

### State Senator District 17

(Mililani Town, Wahiawā)

- Donovan Dela Cruz **D** (Incumbent)
- Nani Brown **D**

### State Senator District 20

(‘Ewa Beach, Ocean Pointe)

- Kurt Fevella **R** (Incumbent)
- Rida Cabanilla Arakawa **R**
- Bob McDermott **R**
- Markus Owens **D**

### State Senator District 25

(Kailua, Waimānalo)

- Chris Lee **D** (Incumbent)
- Bobby Silva **D**

### State Rep. District 5

(Kea‘au, Mountain View, Volcano, Pāhala, Punalu‘u, Nā‘ālehu, Hawaiian Ocean View)

- Jeanné Kapela **D** (Incumbent)
- Matt Kaneali‘i-Kleinfelder **D**
- Dalene McCormick **R**

### State Rep. District 10

(Wailuku)

- Tyson Miyake **D** (Incumbent)
- Ki‘i Kaho‘ohanohano **D**
- Travis Bumanglag **R**

### State Rep. District 12

(Pukalani, Makawao)

- Kyle Yamashita **D** (Incumbent)
- Keoni Kuoha **D**
- Dan Johnson **R**

### State Rep. District 14

(Labaina)

- Elle Cochran **R** (Incumbent)
- Kanamu Balinbin **D**
- Sne Patel **D**
- Ashley Olson **D**
- Pā‘ele Kiakona **G**

### State Rep. District 19

(‘Āina Haina, Niu Valley)

- Mark Jun Hashem **D** (Incumbent)
- Kahi Pacarro **D**

### State Rep. District 21

(Pālolo Valley, Wilhelmina Rise)

- Ranell Asuega-Fualaau **D**
- Angie Knight **D**
- Jake Takaya Morrow **D**
- Andrew Phomsouvanh **D**
- Derek Turbin **D**

### State Rep. District 26

(Makiki, Punchbowl)

- Nathan Kenichi Char **D**
- Janel Fujinaka **D**
- Arjuna Heim **D**
- Ian Ross **D**
- Robin (Robyn) McCreary **R**
- Tony Silva **R**

### State Rep. District 28

(Sand Island, Chinatown)

- Michael (Cov) Ratcliffe **D** (Incumbent)
- Reno Abihai **D**
- Nadia Alves **D**
- Ernest Carvalho **D**
- Anthony (Tony) Nagatani **D**

Remember – for mail-in voting it is critical to place your ballot in the mail one week prior to the August 8 Primary Election deadline to ensure that your vote is received and counted. ■

For more information about all 2026 candidates - who they are and their views on the issues that you care about – visit these online resources:

2026 Aloha Rising: Voter Info - [oha.org/vote](http://oha.org/vote)

Ka Wai Ola August Election Issue (out in late July) - [kawaiola.news](http://kawaiola.news)

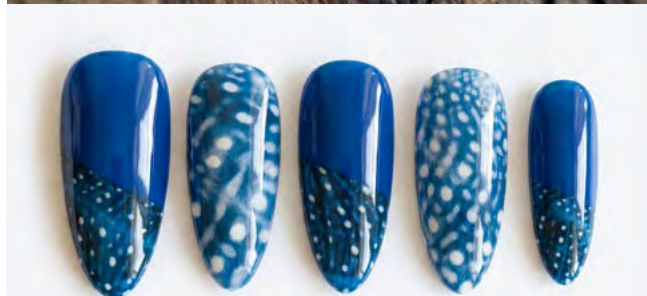
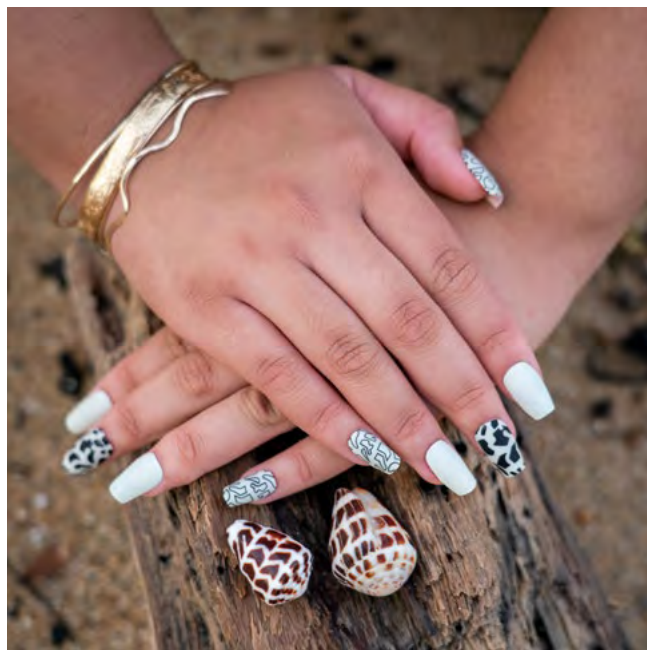
Eo Aupuni - IG @eoaupuni

Civil Beat: Election Guide - [civilbeat.org/elections-2026](http://civilbeat.org/elections-2026)

Insights on PBS Hawai‘i - [youtube.com/@PBSHawaii](http://youtube.com/@PBSHawaii)

# Design Tips: Nail Art From Molokaʻi

By Kelsey Kukaua Medeiros



Iwi Nails owner Lihau Willing is also the primary designer. She creates her designs by hand. Here are some examples of her work. Top photo: Pūpū Pōniuniu 1 from her Pūpū Hinuhinu collection. Middle photo: Lelewaʻa from her Lipo collection. Bottom photo: Ula from her Palaka collection. - Photos: Arianna Patterson

Iwi Nails was born in late 2021 by owner Lihau Willing's desire to create nail art designs that reflect her culture and identity rooted in Hawaiʻi. The wahine born in South Kona met her husband from Molokaʻi, and prior to settling on the Friendly Isle in 2009, the pair spent some time in Korea. It was there that Willing was exposed to the global beauty industry, particularly gel nail strips and accessories. Upon returning to the Islands, she researched what it would take to produce a long-lasting product with ʻāina-inspired designs.

Today, "Iwi Nails offers semi-cured gel nail strips and custom press-ons, with a focus on community engagement through collaborations with local artists and nonprofits," according to its website. "Unlike typical nail strips, you cure these after application for a manicure that lasts 3-4 weeks when applied correctly."

She recalled a couple of her first collections, Hebrew cone shell and pastel palaka prints, which are still among the brand's most popular designs.

"On that first day, I had 50 orders and it went from there," she said. "It was very much unplanned."

Storytelling is a priority, she adds, noting that intentional moʻolelo is included in the packaging, on the website and through social media. "One really important thing for me is making sure that Hawaiʻi has accurate cultural representation not just on the continent but across the world. Our designs aren't just for Hawaiʻi people to wear."

Willing joined Purple Maia Foundation's FoundHer, a business accelerator for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Asian women entrepreneurs across Hawaiʻi, as part of the 2022/2023 cohort. She also filmed a commercial with Disney Advertising called "Let Your Nails Do The Talking," now streaming across Disney+ and Hulu.

Iwi Nails can be shopped online and in wholesale retailers across the Islands. Last November, Willing launched her first storefront on Molokaʻi, which also showcases other local makers.

"It's been really good and offers a curated boutique vibe," she said. "As a business owner [here], there are benefits and struggles — shipping is a struggle, cost can be restrictive, networking and mentorship is tough. But the community is strong and supportive."

Expanding the company's reach and partnerships continues to be a focus. Iwi Nails will be at pop-up markets in Honolulu over the summer, including the Made in Hawaiʻi Festival on August 20-23.

The businesses' Look Good Do Good program donates a percentage of sales to various causes. Its Beh-beh collection, in collaboration with @elc.designs, has supported Kūlanīākea, a Hawaiian immersion early learning program committed to raising the next generation of ʻŌiwi leaders. Other collaborations have benefited student designers from Molokaʻi High School;



Lihau Willing - Courtesy Photo

Kona nonprofit Kupa ʻĀina o Keauhou, which aims to protect natural resources, community spaces, and sacred historical places; and The Hawaiʻi LGBT Legacy Foundation, which aims to support, empower, educate, unify and facilitate LGBT organizations and individuals across the state.

"As I started to hone in on Iwi's purpose, people connect to the designs and seeing themselves in it, right?"

The nails are such a powerful way of self-expression. So, being able to choose a design that feels truly yourself, it's huge," Willing said. "What I started to realize was that I could share what felt like me and some people might relate to that. But the more I could share other people's perspectives and identities, the more people would be able to find belonging in these designs. We've shared a lot of unconventional stories that you wouldn't think would be through nails."

Willing is the brand's sole employee, though, she has brought on part-time workers to help with fulfillment previously, she said, adding, "I wanted to create more job opportunities but then it became difficult to afford it, especially with the surge in tariffs. I had to pare down. I'm looking to bring back a team eventually."

She is also the primary designer, which she does by hand working with simple block shapes.

When asked what advice she'd give to other Hawaiʻi small business owners, she said, "Give in to the delusion."

"I've had to think big and believe this is totally going to work and just commit. You have to be in it 100%. It's never going to be easy," Willing said. "It's a crazy steep learning curve owning a business. I didn't expect it to evolve and probably would have done things differently if I knew more from the beginning. But it has taught me to give myself a little more grace, to be flexible and resilient. Understanding the importance of a vision, or something you're working toward, is what keeps me going." ■

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

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# Moloka'i is Ready for Another Option

## Lāna'i Air Will Begin Flying Between O'ahu and Moloka'i in September

By Philamer Felicitas

Nearly every weekend, Jay-R Kaawa boards a flight between Maui and Moloka'i. The trips are not usually for work; they are for family.

Kaawa, head of Summer and Extended Learning at Kamehameha Schools Maui, regularly travels home to Moloka'i to care for her father, who is living with dementia. At least once a month, she and her siblings help fly him to Maui or O'ahu for appointments and support. Other times, she makes the trip to check on him, spend time with him and help manage his care. For Kaawa, transportation is not a convenience. "It is a necessity. We need reliable air transportation. Bottom line," she said.

Her story is one shared by families across Maui Nui who routinely travel between Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui and O'ahu for healthcare, work and time with loved ones. That reality is why many residents are paying close attention to Lāna'i Air's plans to expand service to Moloka'i.

The airline, which began as a charter service connecting Honolulu and Lāna'i, has evolved over the past several years. Originally created to transport visitors to Lāna'i, the company expanded public ticket sales in 2024 and now markets itself as another option for island residents. Earlier this year, Lāna'i Air announced plans to begin service to Moloka'i, adding a second commercial air carrier to an island that has spent years with limited transportation options.

The expansion marks the latest step in the company's growth. The airline intends to operate four daily roundtrip flights between Moloka'i and Honolulu using their 19-seat Cessna SkyCourier aircraft. They have been promoting the aircraft's larger cabin and accessibility features while emphasizing its goal of improving transportation options for residents traveling for healthcare, education, work and family obligations.

Kaawa flies home nearly every weekend and estimates she spends at least \$220 on airfare each trip. Sometimes, she said, a one-way ticket can cost more than \$200. "Just from an economic standpoint, having a competitor will hopefully bring down fares," she said. While she considers herself fortunate to be able to afford those trips, she worries about residents who cannot.

"If one plane is out of commission, the whole schedule is messed up," she said. Despite those



Lāna'i Air's Cessna SkyCourier aircraft. - Photo: Anthony Kaauamo

challenges, Moloka'i residents continue to find ways to get where they need to go.

"We're resourceful in that way, we always find ways to make things work," Kaawa said. Some residents catch rides on boats operated by friends or family members. Others coordinate travel with fishermen making trips between islands. For many, finding transportation is simply part of daily life. "We're going to make do with what we have, but that doesn't mean it's right," she said.

Accessibility is another concern. Because of his dementia, Kaawa's father often struggles boarding smaller commuter aircraft. While he remains physically capable, navigating the tight spaces of a small plane can be difficult. "I literally have to hold his head down and crawl him into the plane," she said.

At least once a month, Kaawa and her siblings fly their father to Maui or O'ahu so he can spend time with family and receive additional support. While neighbors and family friends often help transport him when needed, she worries about the burden placed on others.

"I would feel much better knowing it's a plane that doesn't seem so cramped," she said. For families caring for kūpuna and loved ones with medical conditions, the size of the aircraft matters. Many residents travel with walkers, wheelchairs, oxygen equipment or other medical devices. Others simply find boarding small commuter planes difficult. Kaawa believes a larger aircraft could make a meaningful difference for those families.

Maui lifeguard Kaipo Garcia has seen firsthand how important reliable transportation can be during some of life's most difficult moments. Inter-island travel is part of his family's routine. His sister lives on Lāna'i and regularly travels because her daughter is undergoing cancer treatment.

"She flies every week because my niece has cancer," Garcia said. Like many families living on smaller islands, they rely on flights to access specialized healthcare services unavailable at home.



Sen. Lynn DeCoite touring the spacious 19-seat Cessna SkyCourier aircraft that will operate four daily roundtrip flights between Moloka'i and Honolulu.

- Photo: Courtesy of Sen. Lynn DeCoite

Garcia has also heard stories from residents whose travel plans were disrupted by delays and cancellations. "They were missing their appointments," he said. "They'd make their doctor appointments based on the [flight's] arrival time and then delays would happen."

The importance of reliable transportation became personal earlier this year when Garcia's father passed away on Lāna'i.

Living on Maui, he immediately searched for a flight home. His

father died shortly before 8:00 p.m. Garcia was able to book a last-minute flight and arrive in time to be with his family. "I made reservations last minute," he said. "At least I got there." The flight allowed him to help carry his father from his bed to the hearse.

For Garcia, that experience reinforced something many Moloka'i and Lāna'i families already understand. Transportation is about much more than getting from one island to another. It is about being present when family needs you most.

Community members have also pointed to another reason they are optimistic about Lāna'i Air's expansion: familiar faces. During community outreach events, residents met airline employees who previously worked for Island Air, a carrier that served neighbor island communities for decades.

Many Moloka'i residents already knew them. That familiarity, Kaawa said, helped build trust. "It's local folks that we know and have seen frequently while traveling," she said.

Some residents also see the airline's hiring of former Island Air employees as a sign that local knowledge and experience remain part of the company's approach. While questions remain about how the expansion will ultimately affect the community, many residents say they are hopeful.

No airline is immune from weather disruptions, maintenance issues or operational challenges. But for residents accustomed to limited options, another carrier represents something many have wanted for years: a choice.

"We're grateful for what we have," Kaawa said. "But we're ready for another option." ■



Jay-R Kaawa (bottom right) with her sisters and father. - Courtesy Photo

# GIVING KŪPEKE BACK TO ITSELF

By Hannah Ka'iulani Coburn and Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

*He ali'i ka 'āina; he kauwā ke kanaka. The land is chief; man is its servant.*

A famous mo'olelo of Kūpeke speaks of the kupua he'e (supernatural octopus) who watches over Kūpeke Loko I'a (fishpond). This is notable because the fishpond at Kūpeke is the only loko i'a known to be guarded by a kupua he'e. Most are protected by mo'o (lizard) or puihi (eel) deities.

These days, the ahupua'a of Kūpeke is also being watched over by La'a Poepoe, the kia'i po'o (lead caretaker) for Kūpeke Ahupua'a.

Located on the east end of Moloka'i, the ahupua'a of Kūpeke includes about 300 acres, from the top of the mountain to the shoreline and out to the fishpond wall. Poepoe's stewardship of Kūpeke is the confluence of his Moloka'i lineage, aloha for his community, a passion to mālama 'āina, an unshakable work ethic, and his foresight.

The designation of Kūpeke Ahupua'a as the protector of this wahi pana (storied place) is itself a remarkable story. But Poepoe is quick to point out that "we do not own the ahupua'a. Kūpeke owns itself. I am just a caretaker."



La'a Poepoe surveys the ma uka lands of Ahupua'a Kūpeke. - Courtesy Photos

## PILINA TO PLACE

Poepoe is native to Moloka'i and the fishpond at Kūpeke figures in some of his earliest memories. He recalls going to the beach there with his paternal grandparents, and his grandmother pointing out important sites in the area, including her birthplace.

Growing up on Moloka'i, Poepoe was taught lawai'a (fishing) the traditional way: follow behind, no talking, observe actions, carry the fish. As a young adult, he would visit the fishpond from time to time on his way to the shoreline to go fishing.

Over the years, he was increasingly drawn to mālama 'āina work across Moloka'i, influenced by the efforts of his father, Mac Poepoe.

In the early 2000s, the senior Poepoe, a long-time leader of Hui Mālama o Mo'omomi, helped inspire the creation of the mālama 'āina initiative Kua 'Āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA) whose mission is to support community-based organizations who protect, restore, and care for Hawai'i's unique native species and ecosystems.

Ultimately, Poepoe was drawn to Kūpeke and his stewardship there evolved organically. No one was actively managing the land or the fishpond. The 'āina near the shoreline was overgrown with invasive plants like mangroves, the kuapā (fishpond wall) needed repair, and invasive limu and fish were pushing out native species.

There was also silt in parts of the fishpond – an unfortunate byproduct of degraded ma uka lands diminished by a combination of overgrazing, out-competition



Nonprofit Kūpeke Ahupua'a is a small operation with a three-member board of directors and no full-time staff. After stewarding the land for seven years, they were able to acquire the ahupua'a to protect it from development. Under the leadership of Kia'i Po'o (lead caretaker) La'a Poepoe, they are working to rehabilitate and restore the entire 300-acre ahupua'a beginning with its 34-acre fishpond.

by non-native plants, and unstable weather patterns that have left swaths of the uplands denuded and vulnerable to severe soil runoff during heavy rains.

When Poepoe began stewarding Kūpeke, the ahupua'a was jointly owned by Namahana Buchanan Estate and Buena Ventura Properties. Both entities were controlled by Stanwood Formes.

Poepoe reached out to Moku Buchanan, a relative of Formes. Together, Buchanan, his wife Lori, and Poepoe began building the grassroots organization that would eventually become the steward of these lands.

Wanting to be pono in their intentions and increasingly invested in the maintenance work that the fishpond required, Buchanan contacted Formes and obtained verbal permission for Poepoe to continue his work rehabilitating and managing the loko i'a at Kūpeke.

Poepoe started small. "I picked a spot to anchor from with no clear plans or specific objectives in mind," he recalled. "I just let the work guide the way, cleaning the property on a loose verbal agreement because it was the right thing to do."

## RETURNING KŪPEKE TO KŪPEKE

For generations, the ahupua'a of Kūpeke was owned by the Buchanan 'Ohana. Looking ahead, Poepoe anticipated that the land would eventually be put up for sale.

He already had a long-term vision to restore and rehabilitate Kūpeke and hoped they would be able to formalize an agreement with the owner. Poepoe was concerned – as most Moloka'i residents are – about developers buying up land to build multi-million-dollar estates that gentrify and ruin the rural character of the island.

When Formes passed unexpectedly in 2018, Poepoe, his wife Mahina, and the Buchanans founded Kūpeke Ahupua'a, an organization dedicated to the restoration and management of the ahupua'a. It was registered as a nonprofit in 2020, and their goal was to position the organization to purchase the land and protect Kūpeke from unwanted development.

Years passed, and as they waited for the estate to move through the probate process, Poepoe continued to mālama Kūpeke.

Repairs were made to the kuapā, invasive seaweeds and Upside-down Jellyfish were collected from the loko i'a, red mangrove was cleared, and truckloads of plastic marine debris – an ongoing problem due to the fishpond's location and prevailing ocean currents – were removed.

Kūpeke Ahupua'a hosted visits from haumāna from schools across the island, welcomed scientists from various institutions to conduct lab sampling of fishpond conditions, and invited the community to come kōkua during workdays.

Poepoe also invested time in building relationships with neighbors from the area; with community-focused organizations such as KUA, Sustainable Coastlines, and the Trust for Public Lands; and with government agencies like the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

A Maui County fireman by profession, Poepoe has invested years of his time and energy in restoring and maintaining Kūpeke fishpond because of his aloha for and commitment to this wahi pana. He has never been com-



Kūpeke Fishpond circa 1940. About 75 fishponds were once in production on Moloka'i. - *Courtesy Photos*



Volunteers help to repair a portion of the kuapā (fishpond wall) in 2021. The fishpond has three mākāhā (sluice gates) and its wall is more than 2,200 feet long.

pensated (or sought compensation) for his labor or time. Poepoe has also taken paid vacation to work at the fishpond and used money from his paycheck to purchase the tools and equipment needed to do that work.

In July 2024, when the probate process for Formes' estate was completed, the ahupua'a of Kūpeke was listed by Corcoran Pacific Properties for \$1.8 million.

For five years, Kūpeke Ahupua'a had worked to raise funds to purchase the land through large conservation organizations, but those processes take a very long time and with the land now listed on the open real estate market, their time had run out.

"We were informed that there was a potential buyer for the land. Someone from outside of Moloka'i had put in a serious offer that was being considered," Poepoe recalled.

Kūpeke Ahupua'a pivoted to a direct community fundraising campaign, seeking donations from organizations and individuals to purchase the land.

The years Poepoe had spent faithfully stewarding the

loko i'a and building a good reputation within the community had not gone unnoticed. "Those who knew us and had been following our work and believed in our mission felt comfortable enough in our abilities to support the cause," he said.

The community came through and, against all odds, in January 2025 Kūpeke Ahupua'a was able to purchase the ahupua'a for \$1.5 million.

"Had the other offer been accepted, all our years of work would have been at risk and the loko i'a would have faced an uncertain future with a new, unknown owner," said Poepoe.

## FISHPONDS AS PART OF A LARGER ECOSYSTEM

Within a healthy ahupua'a, fishponds are part of a carefully managed and balanced ecosystem.

Hawaiian loko i'a represent a highly sophisticated form of aquacultural engineering unlike anything else in the world. They are impressive features of Hawai'i's traditional food system, and this speaks to the brilliance of our ancestors.

The loko i'a at Kūpeke is a kuapā style fishpond with three mākāhā (sluice gates). Its wall is more than 2,200 feet long and connects the land at either side of Kūpeke, encompassing nearly 34 acres.

For centuries, an uninterrupted chain of fishponds stretched for miles along Moloka'i's southern shore. It is estimated that about 75 fishponds were once in production on the island but during the 20th century many fell into disrepair.

Hawaiian fishponds are not merely places to trap and harvest fish. They function as one hānau, (birth sands). Juvenile fish biologically imprint on Kūpeke by the hundreds of millions.

"It's a mistake to believe loko i'a primarily function as an industrial feed lot to mass produce a specific number of pounds of fish per acre," Poepoe said. "That's why they are called fish ponds not fishing ponds – a loko i'a, not a loko lawai'a. There's a balance to maintain and a kuleana for knowing that balance."

Many of the fish born in healthy fishponds make their way out to sea, become part of the wild fish population, and ultimately part of the food chain ecosystem all the way to pelagic (deep water) fish.

Through fishponds, our kūpuna not only created a productive and sustainable nearshore food resource, they amplified the wild fish population as well.

## ONGOING MĀLAMA 'ĀINA AT KŪPEKE

With Kūpeke now safe from development, Poepoe continues to work towards his vision of aloha 'āina and restoration of the ahupua'a beginning with the rehabilitation of the loko i'a.

Kūpeke Ahupua'a remains a small operation. It has a three-member volunteer board and no permanent full-time staff. Poepoe continues to do much of the work himself, but now has a helper thanks to Kupu, a

## GIVING KŪPEKE BACK TO ITSELF

Continued from page 19



Members of Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i helped La'a Poepoe remove tons of marine debris scattered within the fishpond in 2022. "Ghost" fishing nets and plastics find their way to Hawai'i's shores from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch via ocean currents. - *Courtesy Photos*

conservation-focused nonprofit that provides environmental stewardship opportunities to young people.

Kupu is sponsoring an intern at Kūpeke Ahupua'a for an entire year and this has afforded Poepoe more time for handling the administrative duties a nonprofit requires.

The ongoing maintenance work at Kūpeke Loko I'a includes invasive species (both plant and animal) removal, marine debris clean-up, water quality monitoring, and limu monitoring. Biomass from the invasive plants and animals removed from the pond is composted and will be used to fertilize the mala (garden).

Poepoe has recently planted a small lo'i kalo near the loko i'a and is caring for several varieties of niu (coconut) that were planted along the coastline years ago. In May, Kūpeke Ahupua'a welcomed partner organizations to help survey and catalog varieties of coconuts among the ulu niu (coconut grove).

"We wanted to elevate the social and cultural revival of niu by connecting people with the places that provide ceremonial meakanu (plants) used in our traditional and cultural practices," Poepoe said.

One variety of coconut tree growing at Kūpeke is particularly special and known to cultural practitioners on the island. It is a variety called niu hiwa and its shell is valued for 'apu'awa (cups used in 'awa ceremonies).

As invasive plant species are removed from the fishpond and the surrounding area, they are being replaced by native and endemic plants. Poepoe gathers the seeds

of plants like alahe'e (a small hardwood tree) and 'ūlei (a spreading shrub) to eventually restore the native forest.

He also has plans to cultivate plants like hala (for lau-hala weaving), wauke (for kapa-making), 'ōlena (turmeric) and iliahi (sandalwood). "Aside from growing lā'au (medicine), we would like to have these plants readily available if needed for iwi kūpuna reburial ceremonies," Poepoe explained.

Kūpeke Ahupua'a is also active in water rights advocacy and water use on Moloka'i. Natural springs supply fishponds and important fishing grounds with a constant flow of fresh water – an essential component of healthy estuarine and marine habitats.

Finally, Poepoe is looking to repair a small building at the site adjacent to the loko i'a that was filled with mud after the recent Kona Low storms in March. He is reimagining the building as a lab fitted with basic equipment that can be used as a gathering space in support of established monitoring and research projects.

Through implementing managed access along with ongoing habitat maintenance and monitoring, a gradual increase in fish populations has been observed at Kūpeke with a notable increase in the number of 'ama'ama (indigenous mullet) finding refuge in the fishpond.

Despite these efforts, and early success, the fishpond continues to face challenges including native habitat loss, increased erosion from rainstorms leading to massive topsoil runoff settling in the pond, and higher-than-average tides that now regularly breach the fishpond wall.

A MĀLAMA 'ĀINA  
PRACTITIONERS NETWORK

Anticipating that their work will become increasingly difficult given existing conditions that are being magnified by climate change, Poepoe is working with Hui Mālama Loko I'a to find solutions.

Hui Mālama Loko I'a – which operates under the umbrella of KUA – is a network of fishpond practitioners and organizations. This alliance allows members to connect, leverage each other's skills, and share knowledge about fishpond restoration and management to support ongoing stewardship efforts across the pae 'āina.

Brenda Lima is the Hui Mālama Loko I'a coordinator at KUA, and she emphasizes the important role that fishponds play in reflecting the overall health of surrounding ahupua'a.

"Common problems facing fishponds are related to water quality and invasive species," Lima said, noting that they are the direct result of mismanagement or neglect of broader ahupua'a systems.

"It shows the gaps in management that have allowed invasive species to become established. Another consequence of historical land use mismanagement in ma kua areas are fishponds being filled in with sediment."

She counts Poepoe's success at Kūpeke as part of a growing movement of fishpond practitioners finding ways to acquire or secure long-term access to the lands they are already caring for. Lima said that Kūpeke Ahupua'a's permanent stewardship of the ahupua'a represents the ideal situation.

"Someone with knowledge of the place – those are the



Hundreds of pounds of invasive gorilla ogo has been removed from Kūpeke Fishpond over the years.

people who should be managing these fishponds," Lima said. "The people that have worked for years to take care of these places, especially if they are a family that has a generational relationship ... they should be the managers providing long-term stewardship.

"That's really the long-term vision that we have for fishpond management."

## MOVING FORWARD

Kūpeke Ahupua'a's mission is to eventually restore – and maintain – the entire ahupua'a, and Poepoe draws inspiration from his maternal grandmother, Marilyn Kahalewai, the artist behind the iconic ahupua'a poster found in classrooms across Hawai'i.

Poepoe said that, for now, the loko i'a is the focal point of their work. In time, they will gradually move their restoration work both upland and out to the reef, following the natural movement of the ahupua'a.

His approach, based on the konohiki framework of traditional land and resource management, reinforces the idea that fishpond rehabilitation is not just about increasing fish populations; it's about maintaining the entirety of an ahupua'a's ecological and cultural systems. When these elements are in balance, communities can thrive.

With an eye to the future, Poepoe is also looking at succession planning and hopes that one day someone from the next generation will step up and take over stewardship of the ahupua'a "so I can step back and just be the yard man," he laughed.

But for the time being, Poepoe continues his kuleana for maintaining the land, rehabilitating and restoring habitat, managing 'āina, and reducing the spread of invasive species.

His is a lifelong commitment to aloha 'āina.

Looking back on Kūpeke Ahupua'a's accomplishments over the past few years, Poepoe notes that while protecting this wahi pana from development is a great achievement, what he is most proud of is "being able to give Kūpeke back to itself." ■

To learn more about Kūpeke Ahupua'a go to  
[kupekelokoia.com](http://kupekelokoia.com)

## Pursuing 7 Billion in 2027 to Stop the Genocide

By Kalaniakea Wilson, Ph.D.

Every year, on July 31, the Royal Order of Kamehameha I Moku o Kohala, Hui Aloha Aina, and community members gather at Luakini Puukohola to commemorate Kamehameha's unification by celebrating La Hoihoi Ea. Luakini Puukohola was built by thousands of warriors from six moku – a symbol of Iokahi. Kamehameha I dedicated Puukohola to Kukailimoku, god of politics, government, resource management, and war.

Given recent attacks on Hawaiian programs, we look to our past for our path forward.

In 1895, Kuhio Kalaniana'ole was arrested for attempting to restore the Hawaiian Kingdom and imprisoned for a year. In 1902, he restored the Royal Order of Kamehameha I and became Hawai'i's delegate to Congress, winning 10 straight elections. Kuhio advocated for county governance in 1905, Hawaiian Civic Clubs in 1918, and the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) in 1921; by doing so he used American law to serve Hawaiians.

The Hawaiian Humanitarian Alliance, Koa Kiai, and the Association of Hawaiian Home Lands which represent wait-listers, are uniting leaders on Moku o Keawe to focus on one bill in 2027 to end the Hawaiian Home Lands wait list under HHCA purpose 101:

- "Return to their lands in order to fully support self-sufficiency for native Hawaiians and the self-determination of native Hawaiians"
- "Establishing a permanent land base ... to live, farm, ranch ... engage in commercial or industrial activities"
- "Historical government to government relationship ... affirm fiduciary duty to faithfully administer ... this act"
- "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to ... affect the rights of the descendants ... of the Hawaiian Kingdom"

The lawsuits attacking Kamehameha Schools and now the HHCA continue a centuries old structure of genocidal attacks to eliminate Hawaiians in a two-step process: destroy and replace.

In my dissertation, *Americanizing Luakini: White Supremacy Colonizing a Nation State*, I use the term "Americanization Genocide" to describe the ongoing structure of attack. Despite the 1993 Apology Bill, Hawaiians and Hawaiian programs in our homeland continue to be targeted.

When Hawai'i state legislators vote against funding rehabilitation for wait-listers, and those wait-listers die on the waiting list, it could be construed as genocide. A key condition for statehood was the State of Hawai'i's acceptance of the fiduciary obligation to fulfill the HHCA compact. This is the only proviso in the 1959 Admissions Act.

Thus, they are knowingly withholding congressionally approved housing to mitigate the effects of Americanization Genocide. Many Hawaiians have died, and continue

to die, on the wait list.

The Royal Order, East Hawaii Homestead Associations, and wait listers on Moku o Keawe continue to have positive discussions and are unified to advocate for measures that fund rehabilitation of wait listers – a 7 billion allocation in 2027 – and to change the 50% blood quantum application requirement to 1/32; called "Road to 7 Billion to Stop the Genocide."

We are reaching out to other Homestead Associations, wait listers, civic clubs, royal societies, and Hawaiian organizations across the pae aina to unite and focus on one bill to advocate for the placement of Hawaiians on Hawaiian land. If interested contact: kupaiwialoha@gmail.com. ■

*Dr. Kalaniakea Wilson is a scholar of Indigenous politics, Hawaiian Kingdom law, and genocide. He chooses not to use diacritical markings.*

## Seeking Kōkua for Kaimana

By John Rhoden

We are raising our Native Hawaiian grandson Kaimana, who is 6 years old. Kaimana's mother, (our daughter) Jayna, passed away in 2019 from a ruptured brain aneurysm while she was pregnant with Kaimana. He was born extremely premature and spent five months in the NICU fighting for his life.



Kaimana Rhoden with one of his therapists. - Photo: John Rhoden

and spent five months in the NICU fighting for his life. In April 2020, we brought Kaimana home and have cared for him ever since, providing unwavering love and support. Kaimana suffers from severe cerebral palsy and brain damage. He is blind, cannot speak, control his arms or legs, hold his head up, sit, stand, walk or eat normally (he is fed through g-tube).

I'm a service-disabled veteran. My wife, JoAnne, and I are living on a fixed retirement income. We could not have foreseen or planned for the tragedy that led us to adopt Kaimana, and this has strained our finances. Kaimana has therapies not covered by insurance and requires expensive special medical supplies.

Kaimana requires a wheelchair full-time and has multiple therapeutic medical and specialist appointments every week. He has grown so much we can no longer carry him easily. To ensure he can get to these appointments safely and comfortably, we are raising funds to purchase a wheelchair-accessible minivan.

The wheelchair ramp conversion and tie-down safety system will be covered through an assistance program, so every dollar donated will go solely toward purchasing

the minivan itself. Without this van, Kaimana cannot access the care he needs to thrive.

We love Kaimana dearly. He is a blessing in our lives and provides us with a perspective that allows us to focus on the important things in life. We embrace the sacrifices and hardships but could really use a little help.

Our community has already shown us so much love, and we are humbled to have to ask for more. Aloha is a way of life and the belief that we are bound to one another; that the wellbeing of one is the concern of all. We believe that spirit lives in every person who has ever loved someone they would do anything for.

We are raising funds to purchase a minivan for Kaimana through Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/826ec251e> and no contribution is too small. Mahalo nui loa from the bottom of our hearts. ■

## Don't Let Kalaupapa Become a Tourism Destination

By B.A. Alexander

I heard a portion of the discussion on the "Future of Kalaupapa" on PBS's *KĀKOU: Hawai'i's Townhall* on May 28, 2026.

I live on O'ahu so I do not fully understand the dynamics of Moloka'i. However, I consider Kalaupapa to be a sacred place that must be preserved. Since it is designated a National Historical Park, why does anyone want that designation to change? And, with it, the government funding for such a site ought to remain in-place.

I understand that the peninsula consists of much more than Kalaupapa. Perhaps the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands ought to work with Mayor Bissen on how those lands can be utilized for the benefit of Native Hawaiians. It ought to be left to the county and Native Hawaiians to determine its fate.

Please do not fall into the 'trap' of looking to tourism as a revenue source for the area. My community of Ka'ōhao (Lanikai) in Kailua has become overrun by visitors in the last 20+ years. It is almost unrecognizable.

Kalaupapa ought not become a tourism destination. Ms. Miki'ala Pescaia ought to be used as a resource to develop a non-invasive way to explore this area. It is not an absolute necessity for certain sacred places to be trod upon by humans.

The State of Hawai'i relies on most of its food and many other products from outside the state. It is beyond time to develop an economy that is more sustainable. The state has programs to assist small farmers. We must develop other models to create a reason for our young people to remain here, as well as to sustain the cultural uniqueness of our home.

In conclusion, I hope that the Maui County Council will resist the allure of tourism. It ought not to be looked upon as a means of advancing the lives of the residents of Moloka'i. ■

## Of Families and Cousins and Lineal Descendants and Ancestral Ties

By Bobby Camara



Hau hele 'ula or koki'o. *Kokia cookei*, its stiff, geometric lau are wind-resistant, and contrast with curved thick petals. - Photo: Lisa Schattenburg

**K**okia cookei and *Hibiscus arnottianus ssp. immaculatus*. Hau hele 'ula is the genus, and koki'o is the species of *Kokia cookei*. Koki'o ke'oke'o is *Hibiscus arnottianus ssp. immaculatus*.

Relationships are complicated. Terminology is important. Aunty, uncle, cousin, tūtū, hānai, makua (kāne or wahine). Lineal descendants, those relations in straight uninterrupted lines of genealogy, as in your kūpuna. "I am a Lineal Descendant of [fill in the name]." Those with ancestral ties to 'āina, with relatives unnamed and unknown. "My family has lived at [fill in the name] for X generations."

Plants, too, have complicated genealogies. Where are they found? Where did they come from? To whom are they related? When and how did they get here? These days, with help from geneticists, we can learn how groups of people, plants, or any thing living are related.

On Moloka'i live two lā'au kama'āina. They are in fact cousins, and are meakanu 'āpa'akuma. Both are endemic to Moloka'i, and are found nowhere else naturally. Both

are extremely rare in the wild, and one, *Kokia cookei* is likely extinct there, but survives cultivated. The other, a pure white, scented hibiscus, clings naturally to life in just a few locations. Sad, but all too true these days. Degraded habitats. Invasive species such as fire-hardy alien grasses, plant-munching deer, pigs, goats, all contributing to deadly population loss.

Please. Do your part to encourage their survival. Ask around for legally acquired keiki. Plant them. Nurture them. Cherish them. ■



Koki'o ke'oke'o. *Hibiscus arnottianus ssp. immaculatus*, the pure white, scented hibiscus of Moloka'i. A handful of wild populations remain. - Photo: David Eickhoff

## Retracing the Footsteps of Our Ali'i

By Shani J.P. Butts

**W**e just wrapped the 2026 King Kamehameha I Lei Draping Ceremony in Washington, D.C., and this one felt different. There was an air of excitement, celebration, and a call to action that left so many feeling invigorated and inspired.

Our mother, Darlene Kehaulani Butts, lovingly known as Aunty Kehau, was a pillar in the Hawaiian community and a constant presence at this event. She served as chair of the King Kamehameha I Lei Draping ceremony for decades.

Aunty Kehau had an appreciation and respect for protocol that went beyond the typical recognition for the necessity of order and procedures – she almost had a fascination with protocol and took pride



in educating herself and others.

Combining Hawaiian and political protocol for an event on the East Coast honoring one of our ali'i was no easy feat. As you might imagine, the Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony in D.C. was Aunty Kehau's time to shine.

This year's theme highlighted Kamehameha I's last words: "E 'oni wale nō 'oukou i ku'u pono 'a'ole e pau" (continue the good that I have done for it is not yet finished). Those words have a whole new meaning for our 'ohana as we carry on our mom's mission to honor our ali'i on the East Coast.

May 2026 marks the 20th anniversary of the *Ali'i Diplomatic Missions and Other Business Travel to Washington, D.C.*, project completed in conjunction with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. As shared in the publication:

"The inspiration for initiating this research were the leaders of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, 'Ahahui Ka'ahumanu, Hale O Nā Ali'i O Hawai'i and Māmakakaua – Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors who traveled together to Washington, D.C., the week of September 13, 2003, to walk the halls of Congress and speak with U.S. Senators. These representatives of the Native Hawaiian Royal Societies sought support for the establishment of a process of federal recognition for Native Hawaiians as a step in the process of reconciliation between the United States and Native Hawaiians, to reaffirm the legal and political legal status as Indigenous sovereigns, protect existing rights and assure perpetuation of the distinct Indigenous Hawaiian culture through self-determination."

In September 2026, Ke Ali'i Ma'ka'āinana Hawaiian Civic Club, in collaboration with the Hawai'i Pono'i Coalition, are excited to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this publication in our nation's capital. We hope you will join us as we retrace the footsteps of our ali'i in Washington, D.C. ■



At the 2026 Kamehameha Lei Draping Ceremony in Washington, D.C., are (l-r): Leila Butts, Shani Butts, Desiree Butts, and Alexandra Butts. - Courtesy Photo

# A Home for Hope in Challenging Times

By KipuKai Kualii

The Barack Obama Presidential Center just opened last month in Chicago; arriving at a moment when many of the values championed during the Obama years are under attack by the current presidential administration.

Located on Chicago's South Side, where Barack and Michelle Obama first built their careers in public service, the Center stands as a monument not simply to a presidency, but to the idea that democracy works best when ordinary people become engaged citizens.

The sprawling campus includes a museum, public library, community gathering spaces, athletic facilities, gardens and public art installations designed to encourage learning, reflection and action.

The exhibits highlight President Obama's journey from community organizer to the White House and includes a replica of the Oval Office and documents key moments of his administration.

Yet the Center's broader purpose extends beyond preserving history and seeks to inspire future generations to participate in shaping America's future. That mission takes on added significance amid the political and cultural battles we face today.

Across the country, attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion programs have led to the dismantling of many initiatives in government, education and business. Objections surrounding the teaching of race and American history continue to be challenging.

And reproductive rights, same-sex marriage protections, transgender rights, voting access, immigration policy, and the role of government in addressing inequality all have become deeply contested issues.



We supporters of Obama's legacy remember his presidency as an era that expanded access to health care, celebrated America's diversity, advanced protections for LGBTQ+ Americans and emphasized civic participation.

Critics, meanwhile, have argued that some of those policies expanded federal authority too far and/or contributed to cultural divisions. These differing viewpoints continue to make our political landscape even more volatile.

The Obama Presidential Center serves as a reminder of a period in American history when the nation elected its first African American president and embraced a message of "hope and change." The Center's opening also offers an opportunity to reflect on a fundamental truth: democracy is not static. Every generation debates the meaning of freedom, equality, opportunity, and justice. Those conversations can be contentious, but they are also part of the American story.

For Native Hawaiians, the Center carries an additional lesson. Like many communities that have struggled to preserve their identity, culture and rights, we understand the importance of civic engagement and political participation.

Progress rarely occurs by accident. It is achieved when people organize, advocate, vote and work together toward a common purpose.

As visitors walk through the halls of the Obama Presidential Center, they will encounter the history of one presidency. More importantly, they will be challenged to consider their own role in the future of our democracy. In an era marked by division and uncertainty, that may be the Center's most enduring contribution – a belief that citizens still possess the power to shape the nation they hope to leave for generations yet to come.

As for me, I agree and can't wait to visit. ■

# Crossing Into Pō

By Nai'a Ulumaimalu Lewis

The first time I crossed the threshold into the Kūpuna Islands was the summer of 2008. I had started working for Papahānaumokuākea the year before and was supporting the education and outreach team on a Pacific educators' cruise aboard the NOAA ship *Hi'ialakai* for the International Year of the Reef.

Over a two-week expedition, we studied coral at its source and shared the work we'd been doing for years to bring back to our communities and classrooms. Most days were on the ocean, but we walked Nihoa, snorkeled in the waters around Mokumanamana – privileged to deliver Dr. Kekuewa Kikiloi, a UH professor, and Anan Raymond of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for several days on Mokumanamana.



Sunset from Mokumanamana. - Photos: Brad Ka'aleleo Wong

What I came to learn the moment I slipped into the waters around one of our most sacred geographies, is that the ocean around an atoll has a way of clarifying you. The line that passes near Mokumanamana is Ke Alanui Polohiwa a Kāne, the Black Shining Road of Kāne, the Tropic of Cancer.

North of this line is Pō, the realm of ancestors and akua. South of this line is Ao, where Kānaka live. Sliding into the depths of the Moananui, I crossed the membrane. My experience returned me anew, newly clear about my place, my purpose, and the core of who I had always been.

This was reaffirmed by the transformation in Kekuewa and Anan when we returned for them.

In 2010, I was given a second chance to access the Papahānaumokuākea. Getting one chance is a privilege. Going twice is magic. Kūpuna intervention. Ironically, the U.S. federal government supported my access to some of the most sacred places to my Native Hawaiian community.



I am not saying this as a thank-you but as a reminder: there are many ways to leverage the present political situation toward pono, even when it takes longer than we'd like, and it does not feel as if we are moving the needle.

My second access was by plane. We landed on Kuaihelani (Midway).

There, I put my feet on 'āina that had witnessed nearly 28 million years of evolution and only recent human visitation.

Surrounded by thousands of nesting mōlī (albatross), I was once again given the ability to see myself at scale – very small in the vast natural world. Aboard the ship, the ocean was everything. On Kuaihelani, my feet were able to build a relationship with the sands of our collective birth across days.

As our ancestors would have it, our visit fell



Mōlī chicks and adults in a field of seabirds on Kuaihelani.

during the summer solstice. On the day we did protocol, we learned that at the same hour, colleagues aboard *Hi'ialakai* (the ship I'd sailed in 2008) were doing similar protocol near Mokumanamana. The veil went thin again. The 530 miles between us was real, but we transcended it.

What Mokumanamana clarified for me, Kuaihelani gave me the spine to act on. The distance between Ao and Pō is not a barrier. I came home with the courage for the hard decisions about my own path – decisions some people would prefer I not make, but I made them.

The Kūpuna Islands do not ask us to move there. They ask us to move with intent, here. ■

*Nai'a Lewis worked for NOAA Papahānaumokuākea between 2007–2016 and continues to act as the executive director for Big Ocean and is the lead author of "Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas: Guidelines for Design and Management" (IUCN Protected Planet series). She is the founder of Salted Logic and Studio Wā. Her current work centers on temporal sovereignty.*

# He Alo a He Alo

By Melissa Kahili-Heede

Today, more than half of Native Hawaiians reside outside of the pae 'āina. Some leave in search of opportunity, education, or stability. Others leave because staying has become too difficult.

Rising housing costs, limited economic mobility, and generational inequities make it unattainable for many families to remain in place. These conditions are not isolated. They are rooted in histories of dispossession, land loss, and political upheaval that reshaped Hawaiian life as we know it.

At Papa Ola Lōkahi, we understand our kuleana to improve Native Hawaiian health wherever Hawaiians live, work, play, and age. Therefore, in response to more Kānaka living on the continental U.S., we established He Alo a He Alo in August 2024 to explore how Hawaiian identity is lived, carried forward, re-envisioned, and challenged in all 50 states.

Through this project, our hope was to build pilina and expand our current understanding of Hawaiian identity and thus, the needs of Hawaiian wellbeing within Hawai'i and beyond.

He Alo a He Alo was a year-long project in which our CEO, Dr. Sheri Daniels, hosted face-to-face gatherings across the continent and in Hawai'i. The project was named He Alo a He Alo (face-to-face) to set the intention and methodology for our listening tour.

We believed that sitting, listening, and talking story face-to-face with Hawaiians across the U.S. would establish pilina and generate unity in our collective kuleana of being well for our future generations.

We partnered with hula hālau, Hawai-



ian civic clubs, college alumni, and Hawaiian-serving organizations across the continent to recruit and host talk story sessions with Native Hawaiian adults to unpack Hawaiian identity and the strengths and challenges that come with being Hawaiian.

Rather than positioning community members as subjects, the project was grounded in reciprocal learning. Participants were recognized as 'ike holders and collaborators in creating understanding.

Each region brought unique perspectives and stories, reminding us that while our experiences may differ, our connections to one another remain unwavering. Recognizing what affects our people's ability to sustain identity as Kānaka within and beyond Hawai'i enables Papa Ola Lōkahi to strategically build relationships and promote awareness. We learned what will help guide future engagement, programming, and opportunities to strengthen connections across our lāhui.

Since the conclusion of listening/talk-story sessions, we have worked to prepare final reports with deep aloha and care for our continental 'ohana and hoa. We are currently in the process of reporting back to the communities who so graciously allowed us in, reporting regionally starting with the Pacific-West and working our way east.

We see these reports as a starting point rather than a conclusion. With the reports come recommendations from community members, rooted in participants' voices. Our hope is that other Native Hawaiian-serving organizations will join us in caring for the health of Kānaka wherever they are, he alo a he alo.

E ola mau ka lāhui Hawai'i! ■



Participants in the He Alo a He Alo Project in Santa Ana, California, in August 2024. - Photo: Papa Ola Lōkahi

# The 98th Annual Holokū Ball

By Ryan Anderson and  
Visa Castillo

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



The 'ōlelo no'ēau chosen as the theme for the 2026 Holokū Ball, "Ka Lama Kū o ka No'ēau - The Standing Torch of Wisdom," reflects both the enduring legacy of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole and the collective responsibility of our generation to carry that legacy forward.

Through this year's theme, the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu (HCCH) honors three distinguished leaders and

is one of Hawai'i's longest-standing Native Hawaiian legacy events now in its 98th year. More than a gala, it is a gathering that celebrates Hawaiian achievement, strengthens community relationships, and raises critical scholarship funds.

This year's Holokū Ball is on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at the historic Royal Hawaiian Hotel; a place rich with history and deep cultural significance.

Long before Waikīkī became a global visitor destination, it was the cherished home and retreat of many ali'i, including our beloved Prince Kūhiō. Holding the Holokū Ball here serves as a powerful reminder that wahi kūpuna like Waikīkī remain Hawaiian gathering places where our stories, traditions, and celebrations allow us to continue to thrive.

For nearly a century, proceeds from the Holokū Ball have supported the HCCH Scholarship Fund with more than \$1.3 million invested in over 2,000 scholarship recipients pursuing their educational goals at vocational academies, colleges, and universities in Hawai'i and abroad.

These investments help fulfill the objectives Prince Kūhiō laid out for HCCH in 1918 at our founding with a vision of a thriving lāhui empowered through education, knowledge, and opportunity to become the next generation of Native Hawaiian leaders.

Community members, businesses, and supporters are invited to join us for an evening of elegance, culture, and purpose. Table sponsorships, silent auction items, and direct donations to the fund will go towards support of educational scholarships. Together, we celebrate our past, invest in our future, and ensure that Prince Kūhiō's legacy continues to flourish for generations to come. ■

*To learn more, purchase tickets, send a silent auction or monetary donation, or to become a sponsor, please contact Holokū Ball co-chairs Ryan Anderson and Visa Castillo at [hcch.holulu.ball@gmail.com](mailto:hcch.holulu.ball@gmail.com)*



Celebrants at the 2025 Holokū Ball show off their finery on the red carpet. - Photos: Kat Wade Photography

organizations whose work embodies the vision of Prince Jonah Kūhiō in service to the lāhui: The Royal Order of Kamehameha I – Chapter One; Kali Watson, director of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; and Kūhiō Lewis a Hawaiian Civic Club member, homesteader, and Native Hawaiian community leader.

Established in 1928, the Holokū Ball

# Kauluhāweo Wraparound Services for Haumāna

By S. Welaahilani Wāhilani

“One Hawaiian at a time” is a phrase Uncle Walter Kahumoku has used to describe the kuleana he holds in supporting Kānaka Maoli in accomplishing their goals.

At UH West O'ahu, we apply that kuleana by endeavoring to bridge the gap between education and the community. With a collective vision to uplift the West O'ahu region, nine individuals came together to create Kauluhāweo, a grassroots effort to deliver wrap-around support services to students and their 'ohana.

We shed light on the importance of modeling Kānaka Maoli values within Western higher education institutions.

“Nā wai ho'i ka 'ole o ke akamai, he alanui i ma'a i ka hele 'ia e o'u mau mākuā” are words spoken by King Kamehameha II that described the intelligence and excellence of Kānaka Maoli.

To model this type of excellence and intelligence, we employ Hawaiian epistemologies in our work to activate one another and our students to become extraordinary individuals. The use of the 'ohana structure, specifically the kaikua'ana-kaikaina (older-younger sibling) model, enable us to shift how we practiced mentorship within our unit.

With this epistemological approach, my colleagues and I can model behaviors for our students that make them feel safe, seen, heard, and, most importantly, valued.

Since its founding in 2023, Kauluhāweo has continued to grow alongside the community it serves. What began as a collective of nine in-



dividuals has expanded to 11 staff and faculty members, six of whom hold master's degrees and two with doctoral degrees.

While these academic achievements reflect professional preparation and expertise, they also represent something much deeper: a commitment to education as a pathway to serve, uplift, and give back to our lāhui and communities.

Many of us come from the West O'ahu communities we now serve, and our educational journeys are not viewed solely as personal accomplishments, but as responsibilities carried on behalf of our 'ohana and po'e.

By modeling this commitment to higher education, we intentionally demonstrate to our students that academic success and cultural identity are not separate pursuits. Instead, they exist in relationship with one another. Through mentorship, guidance, and daily interactions, we encourage students to see their own educational pathways as opportunities to become future leaders, advocates, educators, and caregivers within their communities.

In many ways, this reflects the kuleana of the kaikua'ana within the kaikua'ana-kaikaina relationship: to guide, protect, and provide for the younger sibling.

At Kauluhāweo, mentorship extends beyond academic advising or institutional support. It is rooted in pilina, reciprocity, and collective responsibility. We strive to model for our students what it means to uplift one another, carry ourselves with humility and excellence, and return our knowledge and experiences to the communities that raised us.

In doing so, we hope to cultivate future generations of Kānaka Maoli who not only pursue higher education but also understand the importance of using their education to serve others. ■

For more information about the Kauluhāweo program, email [nhssp@hawaii.edu](mailto:nhssp@hawaii.edu)

S. Welaahilani Wāhilani is the director of Hui Kīpaipai: Early Academic Outreach at UH West O'ahu. He is a graduate of Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, UH West O'ahu, and UH Mānoa, currently pursuing an EdD. His work centers on integrating Indigenous culture into academia, challenging systemic barriers, and fostering decolonial praxis that supports both student and staff success.



Participants in the 2nd annual “We Go West: Seniors, Let's Go Kākou.”  
- Photo: Rouel Velasco

# Register Now for Our Fall 2026 Programs!

By Bryan Esmeralda



Registration for Lili'uokalani Trust's Fall Term and Fall Break programs is now open! Your kamalei (youth ages 0-26) 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.

with engagement opportunities offered throughout the fall.

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 wellbeing to help kamalei on their path to thriving.

'Ohana are invited to explore the full lineup of offerings in LT's Fall 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 kamalei thrive through our many program offerings! ■

Bryan Esmeralda serves as Director of External Relations at Lili'uokalani Trust.



Enjoying crafts at LT's 'Ohana Night in Wai'anae last year.  
- Courtesy Photo

Fall Term programs are generally available from August 10 through December 18, while Fall Break programs will be available from October 5-9, providing kamalei with safe, enriching, and fun places to learn, grow, and connect while school is out.

'Ohana can look forward to a full season of programming, along

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# What Does This Look Like on My Plate?

By Jodi Leslie Matsuo, DrPH, RDN

Many of us have left a doctor's visit with important health advice: lower your blood pressure, bring down your blood sugar, improve your cholesterol, lose weight, or protect your kidneys. We may agree with this advice. We may even feel motivated to make changes. However, when we get home and open the refrigerator, the real question becomes much more practical: "What does this look like on my plate?"

Follow your doctor's advice by asking for one clear next step. You might ask: What is one food I can add more often to support this condition? Or, what is one food or drink I can replace with a healthier choice?

These are some of the most empowering questions you as a patient can ask. Asking questions does not mean you are challenging your doctor or being disrespectful.

Information gives you a sense of direction, and direction helps move you from worry to action. It means you are helping your medical provider understand what your real life looks like. It means becoming an active participant in your care, so you can leave with enough understanding to take the next step.

Your doctor may know your labs, diagnosis, and medications, but you know your kitchen, your budget, your family meals, and the foods you grew up with. When you ask, "What does this look like on my plate?" you are bringing those two worlds together. That is where good advice can become a plan you actually follow. It is one way we take kuleana for our health.

For doctors and other providers, this question is worth



listening to because it may determine whether motivation turns into real-life action. Patients often look to you as a trusted guide, and one clear answer can help them leave the visit with hope, direction, and a next step they can follow.

low.

They may be wondering: Can I still eat the foods I grew up with? Do I have to give up rice, poi, 'uala, or the meals my family shares? What changes can I make without feeling overwhelmed?

Beneath these questions, they are really asking, "Can you help me understand this diagnosis in the context of my real life?" Patients do not always need a long lecture or a perfect meal plan. They need one clear, doable next step.

Instead of only saying, "eat better" or "exercise more," say, "this week, try adding one vegetable to dinner," "switch one sugary drink to water or unsweetened tea," or "walk for 10 minutes after your largest meal."

Last year, I shared about my FoodRX Assistant app, created for individuals and families who want personalized nutrition guidance, meal plans, and recipes. I recently launched FoodRX Clinical, created for health professionals, offering evidence-based nutrition protocols and culturally tailored patient handouts.

Together, these tools are meant to support both sides of the care conversation, helping patients and providers move from general advice to clearer answers to the question: "What does this look like on my plate?" ■

Follow Dr. Matsuo on Facebook @DrJodiLeslieMatsuo, and on Instagram and Twitter/X @foodrx-blueprint.

# He Kini a Mano ka 'Ike i nā Ki'i Nūpepa Kahiko

Na Kalani Akana, PhD

Aloha pumehana kākou. Ma waena o nā momi i loko o nā nūpepa kahiko, aia nā ki'i o nā manawa iki (moments) i pa'i ki'i 'ia – nā manawa iki e hō'ike ana i ka hanohano o ka lāhui Hawai'i.

'O kekahi o ia mau ki'i ke ki'i o ka Hale o Nā Ali'i ma nā alapi'i o 'Iolani Hale Ali'i e ho'omana'o ana iā Kamehameha 'Ekahi ma ka lā nui nona—ka lā nui 'o Kamehameha i ho'okānāwai 'ia e kona mo'opuna, e ka mō'i Kamehameha V, Lota Kapuāiwa ma 1871.

Ma ka nānā pākāka 'ana i ke ki'i (nāna ma lalo), he ki'i wale nō ia o kekahi hui kānaka. Akā, ua maopopo 'ia e nā kānaka noi'i me nā kānaka kākau mō'aukalo, na ke ki'i kahiko e kono a ho'olalelale i nā nīnau i loko o ka mea nānā. 'O wai nā kānaka i ke ki'i? No ke aha mai lākou e kū nei pēlā? Ma hea lākou? Ināhea i pa'i 'ia ai ke ki'i?

'O ka nīnau "O wai?" ka mea ma'alahi e pane ai. Aia ma ka lepe ki'i kēia: "HUI KA HALE ALII MA KE ALAPI'I O KA HALE MANA HOOKO..."

'O ka Hale o Nā Ali'i (House of Chiefs) kekahi hui i ho'okumu 'ia ma hope o ka ho'okāhuli aupuni a i 'ōili ma ka makahiki 1911 i mea e mau ai ka hana a Kalākaua

ma kāna Hale Nauā, kekahi hui i mālama i nā mo'olelo a me nā mo'okū'auhau o nā kūpuna.

Ua pane 'ia ka nīnau "Ma hea?" ma ka lepili "ma ka ke alapi'i o ka Hale Mana Ho'okō." 'Oiai ua pau ke aupuni Hawai'i i ka lima pākā'a, ua kū ha'aheo ka Hale o Na Ali'i ma ka ke alapi'i o 'Iolani Hale Ali'i i mea e kāko'o mau ai i ka mana o nā ali'i.

'O kekahi nīnau ko'iko'i 'ē a'e ka nīnau "Inahea?" Ua pa'i 'ia ke ki'i ma ka makahiki 1914, ka wā o ka Territore a he wā i luna 'ia e nā 'Elima Nui (Castle & Cooke mā). Na lākou e hopu ana i ka mana o ke kālai'aina, ka 'ona 'aina, me ke kālā he nui mai nā 'aina mahikō.

No laila, ko'iko'i ke ki'i no ka mea aia ka Hale o Nā Ali'i ke kū 'onipa'a a lōkahi nei no ka mana o ka lāhui Kanaka me na mea i 'ona 'ole 'ia e ka 'Elima Nui: ka mo'okū'auhau, ka mo'olelo, ka mo'omeheu, ka 'ōlelo.



No ke aha mai lākou e kū nei ma nā alapi'i? Ma kekahi mau mo'olelo nūpepa o ka wā like, ua 'ōlelo 'ia ua kū ha'aheo ka Hale o Nā Ali'i ma 'Iolani Hale O Nā Ali'i ma ka lā paikau 'o Kamehameha.

'O ka 'Ahahui Māmakakaua, ua kū kia'i lākou ma ka kia 'o Kamehameha. A 'o nā kāne o ka Medala Mō'i 'o Kamehameha me nā wahine o ka 'Aha-

hui Ka'ahumanu, ua paikau lāua ma ke alanui Mō'ikāne mai 'A'ala, kūnou ma ke kia 'o Kamehameha, huli hema ma Kauikeaouli 'Ipuka, ka'alo i ka Hale o Nā Ali'i, huli hema a puni ka hale ali'i.



Hale o Nā Ali'i ma ke alapi'i o 'Iolani Hale Ali'i. Kuokoa 6.19.1914 - Courtesy Photo

'O kekahi mea kupanaha 'ē a'e i loko o ke ki'i 'o ia nō 'o kekahi ki'i 'o Kūkā'ilimoku, ke akua kaua a Kamehameha. Ua ho'okō nō ka mana o ke aupuni Hawai'i.

No kākou, he mea ho'omana'o ia mau ki'i kahiko. 'A'ole moakāka nā pane, akā na nā nīnau e alaka'i iā kākou i kekahi 'ike hohonu e pili ana i nā kūpuna i paikau nō kākou ma lā Paikau 'o Kamehameha ma kēlā wā. ■

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 [kawaiiola.news](http://kawaiiola.news).

## RIMPAC Protested Across the Pae 'Āina

On June 24, kia'i from the Ho'opae Pono Peace Project, a coalition of organizations, gathered just after sunrise outside the U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters near Pearl Harbor to bless and honor the lands, creatures and people harmed by RIMPAC. Meanwhile, in Kailua and Kāne'ohe, members of Hui Aloha 'Āina o Ko'olaupoko hung banners protesting RIMPAC from overpasses. On June 28, kia'i from Malu 'Āina and Protect Pōhaku-  
loa organized an afternoon RIMPAC protest along Bayfront Highway in Hilo.

RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific), is the biennial international military exercise conducted in Hawai'i. This year, it began on June 24 and will conclude July 31. Military personnel from 31 countries are currently in Hawai'i, at the invitation of the U.S., for five weeks of war games that will

include over 30 surface ships, 206 aircraft, at least five submarines and about 30,000 personnel.

The protests are part of a larger, decentralized movement of organizations and individuals working to stop RIMPAC. The Stop RIMPAC website says, in part, "the bombing of a peaceful, neutral country under an illegal occupation has already gone on too long ... killing dolphins and whales, destroying sacred places, and polluting the ocean with tons of toxic chemicals to better prepare for war is unacceptable."

In addition to raising awareness of the harm that RIMPAC causes, the movement is circulating an "END RIMPAC" sign-on letter online. Key areas of concern outlined in the letter are RIMPAC's negative environmental, social and political impacts.

Addressed to Gov. Josh Green, Hawai'i's Congressional Delegation, Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Admiral Stephen T. Koehler, and the heads of states of all coun-



Members of Hui Aloha 'Āina o Ko'olaupoko hold a banner protesting RIMPAC on an overpass in Kāne'ohe. - Photo: Jordan Kapono Nakamura



Following a sunrise blessing for the 'āina members of the Ho'opae Pono Peace Project hold signs near Pearl Harbor to protest the harm caused by RIMPAC. - Photo: Oren Tsutsumi

## OHA Revives 'Aha 'Ōpio Civic Engagement Program After 20 Years



The return of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' 'Aha 'Ōpio civic engagement program in 2026 after a 20-year hiatus brought together 38 Native Hawaiian student delegates from across the pae 'āina and the continent for six days of leadership development and civic engagement. From June 21-26, delegates learned about the legislative process and held their own mock legislative session, producing 37 bills addressing issues ranging from arts and culture to land rights and sovereignty. The program concluded with a final session in which nine bills were passed, highlighting the ideas, leadership and commitment of Hawai'i's next generation of Native Hawaiian leaders. This photo, taken in the House Chamber at the State Capitol, includes 'Aha 'Ōpio participants, OHA trustees and staff, and state lawmakers. - Photo: Philamer Felicitas

tries participating in RIMPAC, the letter calls for the immediate and permanent termination of RIMPAC, restoration of the lands and waters affected by RIMPAC, and for the return of all Hawaiian lands in safe and healthy condition once leases expire.

RIMPAC includes amphibious operations, gunnery and missile exercises, anti-submarine warfare and a sinking exercise (SINKEX) of a decommissioned naval ship. The devastation to the marine ecosystem cannot be overstated.

According to the letter, during RIMPAC, a "take" (i.e., kill) permit is granted to the military by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) allowing for the deaths of over a million marine animals per cycle as acceptable collateral damage from the missiles, explosives and gunfire deployed during live-fire exercises.

SINKEX bombing exercises release large quantities of toxins into the water including PFAS,

PCBs, asbestos and heavy metals that poison fish and contaminate the marine food chain. Turtle nesting areas and coral reefs are severely harmed by amphibious landing exercises. And sonar used during naval war games terrify and disorient cetaceans like whales and dolphins, often resulting in death.

The letter states that besides the devastating environmental consequences, sex trafficking increases dramatically during RIMPAC. Bars and strip clubs even hang "Welcome RIMPAC" banners outside their establishments during the exercises. For more information or to sign the letter go to [endrimpac.org](http://endrimpac.org).

### O'ahu Rainwater Capture Program

Nonprofit Mālama Maunalua recently launched its Get Rain Ready Rainwater Capture and Incentive Program in collaboration with the City and County of

Honolulu Department of Facility Maintenance. The program's goal is to help O'ahu's communities reduce flooding and pollution in our waters.

They are currently seeking applicants from homeowners for the free direct-install program. Selected applicants will receive a free rain barrel installed on their property, a rain garden, or a native tree. Each of these rainwater capture solutions help to reduce storm water runoff within that watershed.

"Rainwater catchment systems, like rain barrels, are crucial for mitigating storm water runoff, especially during heavy rainfall events like we've been experiencing," said Mālama Maunalua Executive Director Doug Harper. "Whether the homeowner chooses the rain barrel, a rain garden, or a native tree, these systems will work together across a watershed to capture and manage

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rainwater, protecting the waterways that feed into the ocean.”

Rainwater capture solutions are a cost-effective way for residents to protect O’ahu’s precious groundwater, reduce localized flooding, mitigate storm water pollution in streams and the ocean, and potentially save money on water bills.

For more information or to apply, go to [rainwaterhawaii.com](http://rainwaterhawaii.com) and click the “Apply Now” button. The application window is open now through July 15. Program requirements and application instructions are on the website. To qualify for the rain barrel installation, applicants must have an existing rain gutter and downspout.



Rain barrels can help protect groundwater.  
- Courtesy Photo

## Blaisdell-Brennan Receives National Honors

Dr. Helen Kaleleonalani Blaisdell-Brennan, MD, has received multiple honors from the American Psychiatric Association (APA), including recognition as a Mental Health Equity Champion and Resident Fellow Mentor. In May she was recognized as a Distinguished Fellow of the APA and granted the 2026 APA Rural Psychiatry Award.

The Distinguished Fellow designation is among the organization’s highest honors. The Mental Health Equity Champion



Dr. Nalani  
Blaisdell-Brennan  
- Courtesy Photo

recognition highlights leadership in advancing culturally responsive care and reducing disparities in access, while the Rural Psychiatry Award recognizes outstanding contributions in rural and underserved communities.

Blaisdell-Brennan is a two-time past president of the Hawai’i Psychiatric Medical Association and has served on the boards of numerous organizations including: Ke Ola Mamo O’ahu Native Hawaiian Health Care System; Hui Hānai; St. Andrew’s Schools; the Honolulu County Medical Society; and ‘Ahahui o nā Kauka, the Native Hawaiian physicians association.

Now in private practice, she served for 17 years as a psychiatrist at Wai’anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center focusing on mental health equity, suicide prevention, physician workforce development, and improving access to care for rural and underserved populations.

Blaisdell-Brennan graduated from Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and Harvard College. She earned her medical degree from UH’s John A. Burns School of Medicine and served as chief resident at the University of California, Los Angeles Neuropsychiatric Institute.

## Freitas Appointed to UH Board of Regents

Makai Freitas has been appointed to the University of Hawai’i Board of Regents by Gov. Josh Green. The Board of Regents is responsible for the general management and oversight of the University of Hawai’i system.

Freitas is a distinguished labor leader with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union with more than 20 years

## Ho’omaika’i to Pū’ōhala’s First Graduating Class!



Congratulations to the first graduating class of Ke Kula Ki’eki’e o Pū’ōhala! Located in Kāne’ohe, O’ahu, in 1990, Pū’ōhala became the first Hawaiian immersion elementary school in Windward O’ahu and the second on the island. In 2018, with advocacy and support from ‘ohana, haumāna, kumu and the kaiāulu, the K-6 kaiapuni school added a seventh grade, beginning its expansion into a kula ki’eki’e (high school). Today, Pū’ōhala provides Hawaiian immersion education to keiki in grades K-12. The school also hosts a Pūnana Leo (Hawaiian immersion preschool) on its campus as well. Pū’ōhala’s inaugural Class of 2026 received their diplomas at a graduation ceremony on May 13 attended by ‘ohana, friends and community leaders. The graduates are pictured here with Honolulu City Councilwoman Esther Kia’aina following the ceremony. (L-R) Moani Mirafuentes, Kala’ikūaiwa Walk, Kia’aina, Apela Coloma, and Kiane Quiroga-Verhaaf. E ho’omaika’i iā ‘oukou! - Photo: Courtesy of Esther Kia’aina



Makai Freitas  
- Courtesy Photo

of experience in organizational leadership and workforce advocacy. He has a track record of cross-sector collaboration, working with educators, public agencies and community organizations, and has spearheaded complex negotiations and strategic workforce development initiatives that have strengthened economic opportunities for Hawai’i families.

In addition to his leadership in the labor sector, he is the West Hawai’i representative on the Hawaiian Homes Commission within the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. In this role, Freitas advocates for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, focusing on affordable housing,

community development and educational advancement.

A graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and the University of Arizona, Freitas brings a balanced perspective of statewide advocacy and local community insight. He resides in Waimea with his wife, Aulani, and their two daughters.

“Higher education plays a vital role in Hawai’i’s future. I look forward to strengthening the university’s mission of teaching, learning and community service,” Freitas said.

## Kanaka’ole Named DLNR Chair

Ryan Kanaka’ole has been appointed by Gov. Josh Green to serve as chairperson and director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR),

effective July 7, 2026. Kanaka’ole replaces Dawn Chang who has retired.



Ryan Kanaka’ole  
- Courtesy Photo

Kanaka’ole has been acting chairperson since December 2025. Prior to that, he served as DLNR first deputy. He is on the advisory committee for military leased lands and represented DLNR on the Mauna Kea Stewardship Oversight Authority, Board of Agriculture and Biosecurity, the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board and the Commission on Water Resource Management.

Before joining DLNR, Kanaka’ole was a deputy in the Hawai’i Department of the Attorney General. From 2017 to 2023, he was a deputy attorney general for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

Kanaka’ole is from Wai’ōhinu on Hawai’i Island. He graduated from Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, has a BA in Political Science from UH Hilo, and a Juris Doctor, along with a certificate in Native Hawaiian Law, from William S. Richardson School of Law at UH Mānoa.

“Serving the people of Hawai’i is an enormous responsibility, one I take very seriously. Our public trust duty to protect the cultural, historical and life-giving resources of these islands is the legacy we pass on to our children. I remain committed to leaving this place better than we found it,” Kanaka’ole said.

## Keaulana Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

On May 16, Waikīkī Film Awards, in partnership with the Hawai’i Film Alliance, presented world-renowned Mākaha

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Brian Keaulana -  
Courtesy Photo

waterman Brian Keaulana with a Hawai'i Lifetime Achievement Award.

Born and raised in Mākaha, Keaulana is one of the most influential watermen of all time and is widely recognized for revolutionizing ocean safety practices, including the use of jet ski rescue techniques.

Over the decades, Keaulana's ocean expertise in the waters of the west side was parlayed into work in the film industry when he was tapped to provide critical support and consultation to major film and television productions including *Waterworld* (1995), *50 First Dates* (2004), *Jurassic World* (2015) and *Hawai'i Five-O* (2010-2020).

He has also acted, with appearances in movies including *The Big Bounce* (2004) and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (2008). And he played himself for two seasons on *Baywatch: Hawai'i* (1999-2001). Keaulana has also worked as a producer, a stuntman, and stunt coordinator in numerous other productions.

His work in the film industry and commitment to the Hawaiian culture and community inspired Keaulana to co-found the International Cultural Arts Network (ICAN), a nonprofit dedicated to elevating, educating and empowering diversity in Hawai'i's television and film industry focusing on Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

## 'Āinapreneur Network Launched

Changemakers Hawai'i, an Ōiwi-led nonprofit, is launching the 'Āinapreneur Small Business Network, a new community-

rooted initiative designed to help Hawai'i entrepreneurs grow businesses that are connected to place, guided by values, and built for shared prosperity.

The network brings together small business owners, aspiring founders, creatives, makers, workforce participants, mentors, funders, and community partners to strengthen Hawai'i's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Members will gain access to peer connection, mentorship, business education, capital-readiness support, resource sharing, visibility opportunities, and collaborative partnerships.

"For too long, our local founders have had to choose between growing their business and staying true to their cultural values. With the launch of the 'Āinapreneur Network, we're proving you can do both," said Changemakers Hawai'i Founder Olani Lilly. "This

is a collective of leaders who are as committed to the health of our 'āina as they are to their bottom line."

Grounded in the "4 Ps" - Place, People, Purpose, and Prosperity - the 'Āinapreneur Network is built to help entrepreneurs move ideas into action while keeping capital, relationships, and opportunity circulating within Hawai'i. "Capital should be a relationship, not just a transaction," Lilly said. "Our goal is to see every dollar recirculate back into our islands, building a regenerative economy that honors our home."

Changemakers Hawai'i hosted a virtual soft launch on June 25 for entrepreneurs and partners interested in becoming founding members.

For more info go to [changemakershawaii.org/ainapreneurnetwork](http://changemakershawaii.org/ainapreneurnetwork).

## 950 Acres of Kāne'ohe Pali Preserved



On June 10, community leaders, conservation partners, cultural practitioners, elected officials, kūpuna and residents gathered at Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden in Kāne'ohe to celebrate and bless the permanent protection of nearly 950 acres of Kāne'ohe Pali. This is a landmark conservation achievement for Ko'olaupoko and the island of O'ahu. Speakers at the ceremony consistently emphasized the importance of mālama 'āina and collective stewardship, reinforcing the theme of the event: 'A'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia - no task is too big when done together by all. Pictured (l-r) are Trust for Public Land Sustainable Hawai'i Project Manager Aka Wedemeyer, Trust for Public Land Hawai'i State Director Lea Hong, Māhealani Cypher representing the Ko'olau Foundation, Leialoha "Rocky" Kaluhiwa representing the 'Aha Moku Advisory Committee, and Charles Naumu representing the Ko'olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club.

- Photo: Philamer Felicitas

## Another Attack on Pacific Marine Monuments

On June 11, President Donald Trump signed a proclamation intended to allow commercial fishing in the Mau and Ho'omaluhia Zones of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, as well as in the Islands Unit of the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument.

The order threatens critical species habitat within and around the monument and disregards Native Hawaiian cultural practices, beliefs and conservation efforts in the region. Environmental law firm Earthjustice will take legal action in response.

Deputy Managing Attorney David Henkin from Earthjustice's Mid-Pacific Office asserts that not only would commercial fishing in marine monuments be disastrous for the environment, it does not help the fishing industry.

"Without fishing in the monuments, U.S.-based fisheries hit their catch limits for tuna

every year. Safe havens allow marine life to maintain healthy populations and prevent corporate greed from stripping the ocean of life," he said.

Research shows that no-fishing zones in marine monuments significantly boost fish stocks. Establishing marine monuments as safe havens allow fish to grow larger and reproduce more successfully which leads to a spillover effect in which excess fish migrate to adjacent waters ultimately increasing commercial catch rates.

This latest order follows similar attacks on the environment by the Trump Administration, including the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument in early 2025. In that case, Earthjustice sued on behalf of Kāpā'a, the Conservation Council for Hawai'i, and the Center for Biological Diversity, and in August 2025 a federal district court struck down the resumption of commercial fishing in the monument. ■



The Trump Administration wants to open Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and Sanctuary to commercial fishing. - Courtesy Photos

# JOIN US *at* OUR NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING

*Molokai*



**LUANA ALAPA**  
*Trustee for Molokai & Lanai*

## COMMUNITY MEETING

**Monday, July 26, 2026**  
**6:00 p.m.**

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

**Tuesday, July 27, 2026**  
**9:30 a.m.**

*Both meetings will be held at:*  
**Lanikeha Community Center**

2200 Farrington Ave.  
Ho'olehua, HI 96729



All meetings will be available via livestream. To watch and see a complete schedule of future meetings please visit [www.oha.org/BOT](http://www.oha.org/BOT)



*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.*

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## Why OHA Should Consider Owning KITV and KIKU

The recent discussion surrounding the potential acquisition of KITV Island News and KIKU TV by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has generated significant public interest. Some have asked why OHA would even consider purchasing television stations. Others have questioned whether media ownership falls within OHA's mission.

Those are fair questions. They deserve thoughtful answers.

At its core, it is about whether Native Hawaiians are willing to lead boldly in the spaces that shape public understanding and public discourse. It is about whether we remain consumers of narratives written about us or become participants in shaping how those narratives are formed.

For generations, Native Hawaiians have too often been the subject of stories rather than the authors of them.

Our history, culture, and aspirations have frequently been filtered through the perspectives of others. While many journalists strive for fairness, ownership still matters because it determines priorities, investment, and which voices are consistently amplified.

This idea is not new. More than 150 years ago, Native Hawaiian leaders understood the power of media. In the decades surrounding the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Hawaiian-language newspapers were central to civic life.

Leaders such as Joseph and Emma Nāwahī used publications like *Ke Aloha Aina* to inform the public, defend Hawaiian governance, and advocate for the rights of our people. They understood that political struggle was also a struggle over information and ideas.

Dozens of Hawaiian-language newspapers produced in the 19th century and early 20th century now stand as one of the richest archives of Native Hawaiian thought and civic engagement. The lesson is clear: controlling our narrative has always been central to protecting our future.

The opportunity presented by KITV and KIKU is not simply about broadcasting. It is about building Native Hawaiian capacity in journalism, production, communications, and digital media. It is about creating pathways for our people to be-



**Kaiali'i Kahele**

CHAIR  
Trustee,  
Hawai'i Island

come storytellers, editors, engineers, and executives. It is about ensuring that Native Hawaiian children see themselves reflected across every level of media, both in front of and behind the camera.

Media shapes how societies understand themselves. It influences civic participation, cultural awareness, and public priorities. In today's environment of increasing media consolidation, Hawai'i must consider the value of locally rooted institutions that are accountable to the communi-

ties they serve.

This conversation is also grounded in global Indigenous experience. Māori Television in Aotearoa demonstrates how Indigenous media ownership can strengthen language revitalization, cultural identity, and civic engagement while serving broad audiences. It is one example of what becomes possible when Indigenous communities control platforms of storytelling.

For OHA, this is mission alignment. Economic development, education, cultural preservation, and language revitalization are interconnected. Greater visibility of 'ōlelo Hawai'i and Kānaka perspectives in mainstream media strengthens both our community and Hawai'i as a whole.

Any acquisition of this scale requires rigorous due diligence. Fiduciary responsibility remains paramount. Financial viability, operational capacity, and transparency must guide every decision. Concerns raised by trustees are welcome and taken seriously.

As chairperson of the Board of Trustees, I have challenged OHA to think differently about what Native Hawaiian leadership looks like in modern institutions and how we shape Hawai'i's future beyond reactive positions. As I have said, this was never just about a television station. It was about whether Native Hawaiians are willing to lead boldly in the spaces that shape public understanding and public conversation.

Greater investment in storytelling has the power to transform how the world sees us – and how we see ourselves. The future of our lāhui requires institutions willing to build enduring pathways for Native Hawaiian success and self-determination. ■

## Two Worlds, One Foundation: Hawaiian and American Ideals of Freedom

Most Native Hawaiians today live between two worlds: the lāhui and the United States of America. There is no denying that the relationship between Hawai'i and the United States has been fraught with tension and conflict. However, as we reflect upon the 250th anniversary of the United States, there is a common thread that connects what it means to be both Hawaiian and American.

That thread can be found in two remarkable documents that have intersected with Hawaiian values and have been incorporated into the foundation of modern Hawaiian kahua: the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the 1840 Constitution and Declaration of Rights of the Hawaiian Kingdom under King Kamehameha III.

At first glance, these two documents may seem to come from very different worlds. The Declaration of Independence was written by American colonists seeking to separate from a king. The 1840 Constitution was issued under a king who sought to preserve Hawai'i's sovereignty by placing the Kingdom under the rule of written law. Yet both documents share the same principle: legitimate governments must recognize rights that come before the government itself.

The Declaration of Independence famously states that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The 1840 Declaration of Rights uses strikingly similar language, declaring that God made all nations "of one blood," that all men are born free and equal, and that all possess unalienable rights, including life, liberty, property, safety, and happiness.

This was not a small assertion. It meant that rights did not belong only to kings, chiefs, or those with political power. They belonged to all people by virtue of their humanity.

The 1840 Constitution also placed written limits on government power. It did not abolish the monarchy, but it trans-



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

Trustee,  
At-Large

formed it into a constitutional monarchy, dividing authority among the king, the chiefs, and representatives of the people. Law was no longer simply the will of one person. The government would now operate according to written principles.

That same idea is central to the American constitutional tradition. Government must be limited because human beings, even those in positions of leadership, are imperfect. Written constitutions help ensure the separation of powers.

The 1840 Declaration of Rights also protected religious liberty, reflecting First Amendment principles by safeguarding freedom of worship, and embracing the separation of church and state by preventing any one religion from being established by government.

It also protected property rights, which was especially significant in Hawai'i because land was central to the future of the Hawaiian Kingdom and people. Yet this history is also complicated. The shift toward Western concepts of private property later became a double-edged sword, contributing to dispossession for many Native Hawaiians. That painful reality reminds us that rights and legal systems are only as just as the people and institutions entrusted to carry them out.

The shared philosophies in these two documents do not erase the differences between Hawai'i and America, nor do they heal the wounds of history by themselves. But they do offer common ground: both recognize that freedom must be rooted in humanity, autonomy, and accountability.

This common foundation can be a source of strength for those of us who live as both Hawaiian and American. We haven't always lived up to these shared ideals, but they still offer a powerful pathway toward solving present and future challenges. It is the common ground upon which we can build the basis for a better future for all in Hawai'i. ■

## Professionalism, Respect, and Our Responsibility to the Lāhui

As elected trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), we are entrusted with a profound responsibility: to serve our beneficiaries and represent the interests of the lāhui with integrity, respect, and professionalism. This trust is not earned through words alone – it is demonstrated through our actions, our conduct, and the manner in which we engage with one another and the communities we serve.

In recent months, concerns have emerged from beneficiaries regarding the tone, behavior, and decorum displayed in some of our meetings and interactions. While disagreement and passionate advocacy are natural and often necessary components of effective leadership, there is a significant difference between healthy debate and conduct that undermines collaboration, respect, and public confidence.

Trustee conduct matters. When interactions become adversarial, dismissive, degrading or demeaning, it weakens the collective ability of the Board to govern effectively. As leaders, we must be mindful that our actions set the standard for others and influence the culture of the organization as a whole.

Our beneficiaries expect and deserve leaders who can engage in difficult conversations while maintaining professionalism and mutual respect. They expect trustees who focus on issues rather than personalities, who seek solutions rather than division, and who demonstrate the values that OHA was created to uphold. Rather than interrupting and unnecessarily rudely ending comment on matters, leaders should be patient and allow for their colleagues to address issues as necessary.

Professionalism is not merely a workplace expectation: it reflects our commitment to our mission. Every trustee shares a responsibility to contribute to an environment where individuals feel safe to express differing viewpoints, where dialogue remains constructive, and where decisions are made based on thoughtful consideration rather than conflict or intimidation.

Recent experiences have highlighted the need for renewed attention to these principles. Reports of disrespectful interactions, dismissive behavior, interrup-



**Luana  
Alapa**

Trustee,  
Moloka'i and  
Lāna'i

tions, intimidation, and conduct that creates discomfort or apprehension among colleagues serve as reminders that we must continually hold ourselves accountable to higher standards.

No trustee, staff member, or participant should feel reluctant to contribute because of fear, hostility, or disrespect. Leadership carries with it the responsibility to model professionalism, foster productive engagement, and ensure that all voices can be heard.

Maintaining professional decorum means allowing all voices to be heard and not rudely interrupting or limiting comment but listening with intention and engaging in discussions that focus on issues rather than individuals.

When these standards are upheld, trust grows. Collaboration becomes more effective and leadership is respected by all of OHA.

Our beneficiaries expect more than policy decisions and governance oversight; they expect leadership that reflects the values of respect, integrity, humility, and aloha. The way we conduct ourselves is inseparable from the work we do. Professionalism is not optional, nor is it situational. It must remain a constant priority, particularly during periods of disagreement or challenge.

As we move forward, let us recommit ourselves to the principles of professionalism and by treating one another with respect and maintaining appropriate decorum demonstrating our commitment to the people we serve, and reinforcing the credibility of the institution entrusted with their interests, with accountability and respect.

Let us remember that leadership is measured not only by the positions we hold but by the examples we set. Our beneficiaries deserve nothing less than a Board that conducts itself with honor, dignity, and aloha.

By strengthening our commitment to respectful leadership and professional conduct, we strengthen our ability to serve our people effectively and uphold the trust placed in us. This is both our responsibility and our kuleana as trustees elected by our beneficiaries.

Aloha kekahi i kekahi. ■

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: KUA-KINI AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT**

On behalf of Kuakini Family 1 LP, Pacific Consulting Services, Inc. (PCSI) is preparing a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) in support of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the planned Kuakini Affordable Housing Project in the North Kona District on the Island of Hawai‘i at TMK (3) 7-5-017:005. Forty-nine affordable housing units are planned to be constructed on the 14-acre parcel, along with a multi-purpose room, parking, and related site improvements. The proposed project site is a vacant, previously undeveloped parcel. The development is being supported by the County of Hawai‘i Office of Housing and Community Development. PCSI requests that persons with a knowledge of traditional cultural resources, practices, legends, or mo‘olelo, on or in the vicinity of the property contact us to share your information and mana‘o. We seek to understand if the proposed development of the property could impact traditional cultural resources or practices. If you, or any persons you know, are willing to provide information for use in the CIA, we would like to invite you to participate in the study. If you are interested in participating, if you know of someone we should contact, or if you would like to receive additional information, please contact Shannon Gomez by email at info@pcsihawaii.com. Mahalo for your kōkua.

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND KA PA‘AKAI ANALYSIS: DHHL WAIOHULI WATER SYSTEM PROJECT, MAKAWAO, MAUI**

Pacific Legacy, Inc., on behalf of PBR Hawai‘i, is conducting a Cultural Impact Assessment and Ka Pa‘akai Analysis for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands’ Waiohuli Water System Project, Waiohuli Ahupua‘a, Kula Moku, Maui Island [TMKs: (2) 2-2-002:Pors. 084 and 082]. The project involves the development and construction of three groundwater wells and supporting infrastructure to create long-term viable water sources and foster sustainability for Maui communities. This includes excavation at the well sites, storage tank, water transmission main, and a service/potential emergency access road on 115 acres. Pacific Legacy, Inc. seeks to consult with individuals and organizations who possess knowledge regarding:

- Cultural associations, mo‘olelo, or legendary accounts associated with Waiohuli Ahupua‘a.
- Past and present land use or traditional gathering practices within and near the project area.
- Cultural resources which may be impacted by the proposed project, including traditional resource gathering sites, traditional access trails, wahi pana, and/or burials.
- Any other cultural concerns related to tradi-

tional Hawaiian or other cultural practices within or near the proposed project area.

- Referrals to other knowledgeable individuals who may be willing to share their cultural knowledge of the proposed project area and wider Waiohuli Ahupua‘a.

Those interested in participating are invited to contact Makanani Bell at 808-263-4800 or bell@pacificlegacy.com.

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND KA PA‘AKAI ANALYSIS: THE KEKAHA LANDFILL WAIMEA, KAUA‘I**

On behalf of the County of Kaua‘i, Solid Waste Division (County), Cultural Surveys Hawai‘i (CSH) is conducting a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) and Ka Pa‘akai Analysis (KPA) for the Kekaha Landfill Cell 3 Vertical Expansion project. The County proposes to develop Cell 3 to gain additional airspace capacity at the Kekaha Landfill located in Kekaha, Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i.

The proposed project would vertically expand the existing landfill within its current 74-acre waste disposal footprint to provide approximately 10 additional years of municipal solid waste disposal capacity while a new landfill is planned elsewhere in the County. Improvements include reshaping waste within the Phase I area, installing an overliner and leachate collection and removal system, increasing landfill elevations, and connecting the expansion to existing landfill gas, leachate, and stormwater management systems. The project would also include tsunami mitigation armoring around portions of the landfill perimeter to reduce coastal hazard impacts. CSH is seeking mana‘o regarding:

- Traditional cultural practices and resources within the project area and surrounding Waimea Ahupua‘a
- Potential impacts to cultural sites, practices, and resources
- Referral to knowledgeable kūpuna, kama‘āina, and cultural practitioners

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact CSH Cultural Researcher, Tehani Baculpo by email at tbaculpo@culturalsurveys.com no later than August 7, 2026.

**CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND KA PA‘AKAI ANALYSIS: PRINCE KŪHIŌ GATEWAY PROJECT, HONOLULI, O‘AHU**

Pacific Legacy, Inc., on behalf of Ku‘ai Halewai, LLC, is conducting a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) and Ka Pa‘akai Analysis for the proposed Prince Kūhiō Gateway Project in Honouliuli Ahupua‘a, ‘Ewa Moku, O‘ahu [TMK: (1) 9-1-017:010 and (1) 9-1-017:041]. The project involves the development of commercial space and kūpuna housing

on 22.7 acres that will directly benefit the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). Pacific Legacy, Inc. seeks to consult with individuals and organizations who possess knowledge regarding:

- Cultural associations, mo‘olelo, or legendary accounts associated with Honouliuli Ahupua‘a.
- Past and present land use or traditional gathering practices within and near the project area.
- Cultural resources which may be impacted by the proposed project, including traditional resource gathering sites, traditional access trails, wahi pana, and/or burials.
- Any other cultural concerns related to traditional Hawaiian or other cultural practices within or near the proposed project area.
- Referrals to other knowledgeable individuals who may be willing to share their cultural knowledge of the proposed project area and wider Honouliuli Ahupua‘a.

Those interested in participating are invited to contact Makanani Bell at 808-263-4800 or bell@pacificlegacy.com.

**KA PA‘AKAI ANALYSIS: THE DWS KAMOLE WATER TREATMENT PLANT WATER STORAGE RESERVOIRS, HĀLĪ-MAILE AND HĀMĀKUAPOKO, MAUI**

At the request of Munekiyo Hiraga and on behalf of the Department of Water Supply (DWS), Cultural Surveys Hawai‘i (CSH) is conducting a Ka Pa‘akai Analysis for the DWS Kamole Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Water Storage Reservoirs project, Hālī‘imaile and Hāmākuapoko Ahupua‘a, Makawao, Maui (TMK: (2) 2-5-004:039 por.). The DWS proposes construction of two raw water reservoirs with a combined raw water storage capacity of approximately 145 million gallons (445 acre-feet). The reservoirs are intended to improve resiliency during drought conditions by storing surplus surface water from the Wailoa Ditch during high-flow periods and providing an emergency water source for wildfire response. The reservoirs will be located adjacent to the existing Kamole WTP and designed to meet or exceed Hawai‘i DLNR Dam Safety criteria (HAR §13-190.1). The proposed project also includes pipelines to convey water by gravity from the Wailoa Ditch to the reservoirs and from the reservoirs to a booster pump station within the WTP site, from which the water would be pumped to the WTP screen basin prior to filtration. CSH is seeking mana‘o regarding:

- Traditional cultural practices and resources within the project area and surrounding Hālī‘imaile and Hāmākuapoko Ahupua‘a.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Continued from page 32

- Potential impacts to cultural sites, practices, and resources.
- Referral to knowledgeable kūpuna, kamaʻāina, and cultural practitioners.

To provide input, please contact CSH Cultural Researcher, Tehani Baculpo by email at [tbaculpo@culturalsurveys.com](mailto:tbaculpo@culturalsurveys.com) no later than 31 August 2026.

KA PAʻAKAI ANALYSIS: HALEAKALA HWY PROJECT, MAKAWAO, MAUI

Pacific Legacy, Inc., on behalf of Commercial Properties of Maui, is conducting a Ka Paʻakai Analysis for the proposed 11047 Haleakalā Highway Project, Makaʻehu Ahupuaʻa, Kula Moku (modern tax district of Makawao), Island of Maui [TMKs: (2) 2-3-007:035 (por.), (2) 2-3-009:066 (por.), and (2) 2-3-009:013 (por.)]. The project is evaluating groundwater wells and related water infrastructure on approximately 207.49 acres to provide a reliable potable and agricultural water source supporting existing agricultural operations, long-term stewardship, water reliability and resiliency, and future permitted agricultural, residential, community-serving, and other potential uses of the property. Pacific Legacy, Inc. seeks to consult with individuals and organizations who possess knowledge regarding:

- Cultural associations, moʻolelo, or legendary accounts associated with Makaʻehu Ahupuaʻa.
- Past and present land use or traditional gathering practices within and near the project area.
- Cultural resources which may be impacted by the proposed project, including traditional resource gathering sites, traditional access trails, wahi pana, and/or burials.
- Any other cultural concerns related to traditional Hawaiian or other cultural practices within or near the proposed project area.
- Referrals to other knowledgeable individuals who may be willing to share their cultural knowledge of the proposed project area and wider Makaʻehu Ahupuaʻa.

Those interested in participating are invited to contact Makanani Bell at 808-263-4800 or [bell@pacificlegacy.com](mailto:bell@pacificlegacy.com). ■



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YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE  
in the Medium Landing Ship  
Homeporting in Hawaiʻi EIS Process

The U.S. Department of the Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed homeporting of Medium Landing Ship (LSM)-class ships at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), Hawaiʻi.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to home port up to nine LSM-class ships at JBPHH, including the demolition of the existing wharf and construction of a dedicated berthing wharf along Ford Island and Roll-on/Roll-off facilities required to support the LSM-class ships. The Navy's Proposed Action is needed to support littoral expeditionary forces, such as Marine Littoral Regiments, across the Pacific region.

Public Involvement Opportunity

The Navy is holding an open-house public meeting, which will include informational poster stations staffed by Navy representatives who will answer questions and share information about the Proposed Action and the upcoming environmental analysis. Public comments will be accepted in writing at the public meeting.

**Public Meeting**

**Monday, July 13, 2026**

4-7 p.m.

Oʻahu Veterans Center, Ballard Hall  
1298 Kukila St.  
Honolulu, HI

The Navy invites the public to comment on Proposed Action, alternatives to be analyzed, potential effects, and relevant information, studies, or analyses. Public comments will be considered under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

The Navy welcomes and values your input.

For more project information, please visit the project website at [www.nepa.navy.mil/lsmeis](http://www.nepa.navy.mil/lsmeis).

Comments may be submitted at the public meeting, via the project website, or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Pacific  
Attention: LSM EIS Project Manager  
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100  
Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI 96860-3134

Please visit the NHPA Section 106 page at [www.nepa.navy.mil/lsmeis](http://www.nepa.navy.mil/lsmeis) for information about the Section 106 process or if you are interested in becoming a consulting party.

**Comments must be postmarked or received online no later than July 24, 2026, for consideration in the preparation of the EIS.**

**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 Kelii Aipia and Meleana Penikala Kahananui of Kalaoa, Kona, Hawai'i. Family Reunion on July 18, 2026, at Kualoa Beach Park, O'ahu. Contact: Nanikehau Keama (808) 594-6289.

**HUKIKU/KEULUA** - The 'ohana of Moke Hukiku and Kapali Keulua is having a family reunion on August 15, 2026, at Māili Beach Park. The 'ohana includes the descendants of James Moses, Mary Kiko, Annie Flores, Jack Moses, Joseph Kaahanui Moses, Frank Moke, Louise Larinaga, Kalei Tisalonga, and Malia Santiago, as well as those of Pio Anakolio, Lokalia Anakolio Holt, James Lawrence Holt, Kaluna Keawekane, Malia Kaneaiakala, Keolas/Ahsings, and Kaahanuis. Contact Hukiku.Keulua@gmail.com for further information.

**KINIKAHIKOAINOA-PAHANE** - 'Auhea 'oukou e nā mamo a Kanialama? Calling on the direct descendants of Kinikahikoainoa and Pooui 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'ale! For more information, email: pukanaokanialama26@gmail.com E ola ka hā loa o ka 'ohana!

**KA'AUHAUKANE** - Na Lālā O Ana Lumaukahili'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, Hawai'i 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, Hawai'i. Contact Monico Galiato (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.

**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

**LOVELL** - Reunion Announcement. The descendants of Joseph Lovell a me Mele Holokahiki will hold a family reunion on Kaua'i, July 12-16, 2028. We are specifically seeking descendants of Loika, John, William, Daniel, and Kini Lovell to assist with the planning and organization of this gathering. Your kōkua is greatly appreciated as we bring our 'ohana together. Please contact Kellie at kelliopupu@gmail.com or Makalapua at kaawa@hawaii.edu for more information and to get involved.

**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 Nakoaehua (Kahaleauki); Maria Malaea (Keahi/Adams, Sam Akahi Sr.); Samuel Kaukani (Mele Kakaio, Rebecca Malulu); Ipoaloha (Kaalani Kekiwi); and Joseph Kaleohano (Elizabeth Nakula, Minnie Aloiau). 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. ■

To create a space for our readers to honor their loved ones, *Ka Wai Ola* will print *Hali'a Aloha* - obituaries and mele kanikau (mourning chants). *Hali'a Aloha* appearing in the print version of *Ka Wai Ola* should be recent (within six months of passing) and should not exceed 250 words in length. All other *Hali'a Aloha* submitted will be published on kawaiola.news. *Hali'a Aloha* must be submitted by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. Photos accompanying *Hali'a Aloha* will only be included in the print version of the newspaper if space permits. However, all photos will be shared on kawaiola.news.

LUNALILO YOUNG WILCOX  
OCT. 8, 1961 – MAY 28, 2026

Kapolei, O'ahu: Lunaliilo Young Wilcox Sr., 64, of Kapolei, passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by loved ones, his son, Oiake'ewe, faithfully by his side.

A Kailua boy, and the youngest of five children born to Rosie Kahalau Wilcox, his life was deeply influenced by his LDS faith and the righteous examples lived by his grandparents, Joseph Oiake'ewe Young and Rose Wauke.

A 1980 graduate of Kalāheo High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving honorably from 1982-1988 achieving the rank of sergeant. He also spent many years in the food service industry. In 1997, he recommitted to living the gospel of Jesus Christ. Suffering from acute sepsis in 2012, Luna retired from his job as a crane operator at Sand Island Coast Guard in 2013.

Luna leaves a legacy of perseverance, faith, and determination to live your life with purpose; he instilled the importance of 'ohana and aloha for all things.

He is survived by his loving wife and eternal companion, Iwakilaukapu Fraga-Wilcox; daughter Keahiloa (Paina) Mikaele; sons Lunaliilo Jr (Sarahlia), Oiake'ewe, Kamakaokalani, Laha'ole (Anais), and Justin Ka'anoiali'i Ka'anoi (from his first marriage to Ronnel Ka'anoi Zuttermeister); and grandchildren Aizek and Kade Ka'anoi; Masina, Lily Selina, and Talitiga Mikaele; and Laha'ole Wilcox Jr.

Celebration of Life will be Friday, July 10, 2026, at the Kāne'ohe Stake Center, 41-117 Halaulani Street. Visitation: 8:00-9:00 a.m. Family Services: 9:00-11:00 a.m. Bishop's Service: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Burial: 1:00 p.m. at Hawai'i State Veterans Cemetery. Lunch to follow. E pū pa'akai kākou.

Until we meet again, Honey, Dad, Uncle, Luna, Papa Luna, Aloha 'oe. ■

# E Ō 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.



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## OFFICE LOCATIONS

Office hours for all locations are 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

All Offices are closed on State holidays

### Main Phone (all islands):

808.594.1835

### Email:

info@oha.org

### HONOLULU

560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Ste. 200, Honolulu, HI 96817  
Phone: 808.594.1888

### EAST HAWAII (HILO)

2100 Kanoelehua Ave., Unit 9 & 10  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Phone: 808.204.2391

### MOLOKA'I / LĀNA'I

Kūlana 'Ōiwi, P.O. Box 1717  
Kaunakakai, HI 96748  
Phone: 808.553.4640

### KAUA'I / NI'HAU

4405 Kukui Grove St., Ste. 103  
Līhu'e, HI 96766-1601  
Phone: 808.241.3390

### MAUI

1887 Wili Pa Loop, Ste. 1  
Wailuku, HI 96793-1400  
Phone: 808.873.3364

www.oha.org/offices

Classified ads only \$12.50 - Type or clearly write your ad of no more than 175 characters (including spaces and punctuation) and mail, along with a check for \$12.50, to: *Ka Wai Ola Classifieds*, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200, Honolulu, HI 96817. Make check payable to OHA. (We cannot accept credit cards.) Ads and payment must be received by the 15th for the next month's edition of *Ka Wai Ola*. Send your information by mail, or e-mail [kwo@oha.org](mailto:kwo@oha.org) with the subject "Makeke/Classified." OHA reserves the right to refuse any advertisement, for any reason, at our discretion.

**AINA REALTOR** - I specialize in helping Native Hawaiians, first-time homebuyers, and local families navigate the home buying and selling process. I currently have buyers looking in all Hawaiian Homestead neighborhoods, and if you've been thinking about selling or buying but aren't sure where to start—or need guidance through the DHHL process—I can help. Let's talk story and explore your options. I handle every step with care, experience, and local knowledge. Call or text: Jordan Aina - RS-85780 - (808) 276-0880.

**AINA REALTOR - BIG ISLAND DHHL LOT** - 236 Lyman Ave, Keaukaha - 3 bedroom, 1 bath Fixer upper, Half Acre lot - Leasehold - Call Jordan Aina (Realtor) for details - 808-276-0880 - Coldwell Banker Realty. I service Homestead on all islands. I also have buyers ready on each island.

**AINA REALTOR - KAUA'I DHHL LOT** - 4336 Haku Aina Road, Anahola - 4 bedroom, 3 bath Fixer upper, 10,000 sqft lot - Leasehold - Call Jordan Aina (Realtor) for details - 808-276-0880 - Coldwell Banker Realty. I service Homestead on all islands. I also have buyers ready on each island.

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**HOMES WITH ALOHA**-Kaumana/ Hilo- Single level 3bed/ 2.5 baths. Built 2009 Lot size 11,900. \$380,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303

**HOMES WITH ALOHA**- Keaukaha/ Hilo- Single level 5 bedrooms/2 baths on 21,155 sq ft lot. \$450,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303

**HOMES WITH ALOHA**- Waimanalo Single level 3 bedrooms/1 baths \$380,000 Major repairs needed. Lot size 7,525 sq. ft. This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303

**LET'S MAKE HOMEOWNERSHIP HAPPEN!** I can help with Hawaiian Homestead and residential properties. Let's talk story! Call/ Text Shavon Aluli, Realtor RS-87524 (808) 630-0554. Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303

**LOOKING FOR HAWAIIAN HOMESTEAD PROPERTIES FOR SALE ON O'AHU?** Helping clients find their homestead lot with care and Aloha! Call/Text Shavon Aluli, Realtor RS-87524 (808) 630-0554. Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

**LOOKING TO SWAP A HAWAIIAN HOMESTEAD LEASE LAND ON MOLOKAI** for a Hawaiian Homestead lease land on Maui. Please call (808) 269-4735.

**SEEKING A PROFESSIONAL TO HELP GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE REAL ESTATE PROCESS?** Buying, selling or investing call Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) 808.295.4474 RB-15598 Homes with Aloha - Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

**SEEKING TRADE/EXCHANGE** - Maui residential Waiohuli Undivided Interest lease for Maui agricultural lease. Serious inquiries only! Contact Noalani at 808-852-2121 - text ONLY!

**THINKING OF BUYING OR SELLING A HOME? CALL THE EXPERT.** Call Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (R) 295- 4474 RB-15998. Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303. To view current listings, go to my website [HomeswithAloha.com](http://HomeswithAloha.com). Call, Text or email [Charmaine@HomeswithAloha.com](mailto:Charmaine@HomeswithAloha.com) to make an appointment to learn more about homeownership. Mahalo nui! Specialize in Fee Simple & Homestead Properties for 40 years. ■

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RS-85780





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Help with tuition and other fees for preschool, K-12, trade  
school, and undergraduate and post-graduate college.

Loan amounts:

**\$2,500 - \$20,000**

**5%<sub>TD</sub> - 6%<sub>APR</sub>**



### Mālama Home Improvement

Expand your home or make repairs.

Loans over \$50,000 require non-real estate collateral.

Loan amounts:

**\$2,500 - \$100,000**

**5%<sub>TD</sub> - 6%<sub>APR</sub>**



### Mālama Debt Consolidation

Consolidate and pay off existing debts.

Loans over \$20,000 require non-real estate collateral.

Loan amounts:

**\$2,500 - \$20,000**

**5%<sub>TD</sub> - 6%<sub>APR</sub>**



### Mālama Business

Purchase equipment or inventory, or obtain working capital.

Loans over \$50,000 require non-real estate collateral.

Loan amounts:

**\$2,500 - \$149,999**

**4%<sub>APR</sub>**



### Hua Kanu Business

Whether it's to purchase equipment or inventory, or you  
need a loan for working capital.

Loan amounts:

**\$150,000 - \$1,000,000**

**4%<sub>APR</sub>**



For eligibility requirements  
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\*Interest rates may be subject to change.

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