



KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA
KAHO‘OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

JOSHUA KAAKUA, Ed.D
Chairperson
CARMEN HULU LINDSEY
Vice-Chair

SUZANNE CASE
‘ĀNELA EVANS
SAUMALU MATAAFA
BENTON KEALII PANG, Ph.D
MICHELLE PESCAIA

Michael K. Nāho‘opi‘i
Executive Director

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Friday, July 1, 2022

10:00 am

In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 132

Honolulu, HI

Online via ZOOM and livestreamed via YouTube

COMMISSION MEMBERS

PRESENT: Josh Kaakua, E.D., Chairperson; Suzanne Case; ‘Ānela Evans; Saumalu Mataafa; Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D; Michelle Pescaia

EXCUSED: Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Vice-Chair

KIRC STAFF: Michael Nāho‘opi‘i, Executive Director (ED); Matthew Hatakeyama, Administrative Officer (AO); Daniel Morris, Deputy Attorney General (DAG); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC); Margaret Pulver, Public Information Specialist (PIS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM); Paul Higashino, Restoration Program Manager (RPM); Cassandra Smith, Volunteer Coordinator (VC); Lopaka White, Maintenance & Vessel Operator (MVO); Grant Thompson, Logistics Specialist (LS)

IN PERSON

GUESTS: Keoni Fairbanks

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 am. Roll call was conducted, and quorum was established with six Commissioners.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of February 24, 2022 Regular Commission Meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to approve the minutes of February 24, 2022 regular commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pescaia.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Kaakua stated that the public was welcomed to make comments at any time during the meetings. No public comments were made at this time.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approve the KIRC Budget for FY 2023

ED Nāho‘opi‘i shared slides regarding the FY 2023 KIRC budget and informed the Commission that the governor had not yet signed HB1600 which was the State Budget bill. The presented budget was based on staff’s best guess as to the final amount of state funding. Staff was requesting that the Commission accept the general fund appropriation budget of \$1,528,123 and approve trust fund expenditures of \$695,734, resulting in a total FY23 operating budget of \$2,223,857.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the state budget included funding for a cultural resources position and that staff was anticipating of 5% restriction.

The KIRC budget included carryover of \$42,000 from FY21 General Funds. There was a reduction in non-reimbursable trust fund expenditure. The non-reimbursable trust funds expenditure included \$49,000 for air conditioning repair for the Wailuku office and funding to cover the KIR II position which was established by the legislature until the holding period was over.

The trust fund balance at the beginning of FY2023 was approximately \$1.2 million; the projected balance at the end of FY 2023 would be \$1,128,736.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed the budget by funding source and program as listed in the memo distributed to the Commissioners and made available to the public.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that once the general funded new permanent Cultural Resource Specialist III was hired the Cultural Program budget would be revised based on his/her needs. Staff anticipated recruiting in the fall, following the six-month hold, to start Jan 1.

Commissioner Case stated the budget instructions were to operate off of last year’s budget during the first quarter until HB1600 was implemented. ED Nāho‘opi‘i replied that the submitted KIRC budget assumed that FY23 funds would not be available during the first quarter and that the trust fund could cover the first quarter.

Commissioner Pang asked if hiring done through the state and if the positions were civil service. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that while the KIRC positions were civil service exempt and that DLNR Personnel allows the KIRC to do the recruitment and hiring. Commissioner Pang wanted to know why there was a delay in hiring. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained it is part of the state budget process. Normally the legislature only gives six months funding initially for the position, anticipating that it usually takes six months to recruit and hire.

Commission Mataafa stated he was happy to see the reduction in non-reimbursable trust fund expenditures. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the staff’s goal during the next legislative session was to get the non-recurring funding made recurring in the next state budget so that it becomes a permanent part of the budget.

Commissioner Evans asked for clarification regarding the new Cultural Specialist position. ED Nāho‘opi‘i clarified that the previous Cultural Resources Project Coordinator was a redescribed Cultural Specialist II position. The legislature gave the KIRC a Cultural Specialist III position. The position still needed to be redescribed since the KIRC has not had a culture person in quite a while.

Commissioner Pescaia asked if there needed to be a motion to expend existing FY22 funding into the first quarter of FY23. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded no; the carryover was built into the FY23 budget.

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to accept \$1,528,123 general appropriation budget, as detailed, to fund KIRC staff positions and program expenses as approved in the State Administration’s budget. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

MOTION: Commissioner Pang moved to approve the expenditure of approximately \$695,734 from the Kaho‘olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund to fund reimbursable grants projects and non-reimbursable operations. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

ACTION: The motion was approved by all Commissioners present via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Evans-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pang-abstain; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye

B. Authorize Executive Director to Continue Discussion with NOAA for Possible Partnership in Building the Kīhei Operations and Education Center

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that he had been contacted by the interim superintendent of the Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale National Sanctuary (Sanctuary), Kate Thompson, in March 2022 regarding the possibility of relocating their current visitor center to the KIRC’s Kīhei facility. Their current location was being affected by climate change and was subject to flooding and sand build up due to sea level rise. They were looking for another government location in Kīhei. The KIRC’s property was located above the 50-year level.

The KIRC has a close working relationship with the Sanctuary. Staff toured the KIRC Kīhei site with the Sanctuary Superintendent and the DAR Co-Manager (The Sanctuary is co-managed by NOAA and DLNR) in April 2022.

There are positives in co-locating with the Sanctuary: possibility of direct federal earmarks from the sale of the NOAA property as well as being partnered with NOAA and including the Sanctuary would require a new environmental assessment which would provide an opportunity to expand the facility's footprint.

NOAA would request space for twenty staff members with five offices and space to house their boat. There are plans to dispose of the Hakilo which would provide adequate space. Additionally, they would request space for wet labs.

ED Nāho'opi'i commented that the neighboring condominium was open to being a conference hotel should conferences be hosted at the Kīhei facility. NOAA would communicate with them.

Staff contacted the architectural firm which did the current designs. They have put together a proposal for NOAA including the cost of incorporating space for NOAA, including the cost of a new environmental assessment (EA) would need to be compiled. This proposal was sent to NOAA. Staff would like to continue discussions with the caveat that there would be no commitment until the Commission was briefed and gives its approval.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if Commission action was needed at this time. It seemed premature and he felt more concrete information was needed before the Commission took action. ED Nāho'opi'i responded that he wanted to brief the Commission and find out if the Commission wanted him to continue speaking with NOAA. NOAA officials needed to know if it was a possibility so that they could convey it to their superiors. Commissioner Mataafa stated he had no problems with ED Nāho'opi'i continuing discussions with NOAA, but it would make more sense to have the Commission vote on a motion if there was a proposal on paper that they would examine. It was Commissioner Mataafa's opinion that it was okay for ED Nāho'opi'i to continue speaking with NOAA without an approved motion at this point.

Commissioner Pang stated he thought that the Commissioners agreed that ED Nāho'opi'i could continue discussions with NOAA without a motion and suggested that ED Nāho'opi'i present something more concrete at the next Commission meeting. He requested that the Commission be kept abreast of any progress.

ED Nāho'opi'i explained that NOAA was looking to hire a permanent superintendent for the Sanctuary, and he would continue to take a hard look at the possibility and provide updates to the Commission in his ED report and bring to the Commission any concrete proposals at future Commission meetings.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i commented the KIRC was also recently approached by the broadband initiative which is the undersea broadband cable going to all the neighbor islands. They were looking for an ocean connection the south Maui area. ED Nāho‘opi‘i spoke with Burt Lum, strategy officer for the Hawai‘i Broadband Initiative at the State of Hawai‘i, and a PKO member and the Kīhei property was considered ideal. He met with officials from the initiative and the contractor at the property last Friday. They were looking for a manhole on the property under which they could do a horizontal tunnel 500 meters out to the sea and would need a land terminal connection. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained to Mr. Lum that the property could be looked at with the caveat that there be compensation, such a long-term rental lease agreement for the use of the property and a direct access to the broadband network. He was told it was possible that they could run it to the high-tech center and run a line back to the Kihei property with broadband for the duration of the cable. The initiative was also interested in building a 1000 square foot building for monitoring and ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that it could be discussed but more information would be needed and that there would need to be a long-term lease agreement for that area.

Chair Kaakua stated asked for clarification since the Commission felt that the executive director was empowered to enter into discussion with our community partners, federal, state, local or otherwise with the interest of the Kihei Operations and Education Center in mind. He asked if the executive director wanted action from the Commission that would signal something on this particular thing. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded no; he did not really it but had put it on the agenda to give the Commissioners an opportunity to express any concerns. Chair Kaakua expressed his appreciation. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that he wanted to know if any of the Commissioners had any opposition to pursuing these discussions. The Commissioners did not state any opposition.

No action was taken on the recommended motion. ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that in the future he may request the establishment of a working group to be involved in future discussions with NOAA with one Commissioner as a member.

Commissioner Pang suggested that the executive director may want to develop a decision matrix, particularly with regard to revenue generation.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Legislative Update

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported HB1577 Relating to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission was mostly absorbed into HB1600 (State Budget) in which there was a non-recurring funding amount of \$400,000; funding for two permanent full-time positions and \$500,000 in CIP funding.

The other legislative bill that may affect the KIRC is SB2067 Relating to Burial Sites which would establish an inter-division program between DLNR’s State Historic Preservation Division, county burial councils, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) to address the location, movement, and restoration of Hawaiian burial sites, or ‘iwi, exposed or likely to be exposed due

to coastal erosion. The KIRC serves as the burial council for Kaho‘olawe, and burial sites are monitored by the Cultural Working Group. This bill did receive a hearing but was not passed on to WAM (Ways and Means).

B. Executive Director’s Report

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported 87% of the FY22 budget was spent and the KIRC was projected to come in 8% under budget.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the Commission to the long-range schedule was provided in the Commission packets.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported staff was interviewing candidates for the two Ocean Resources Specialists (ORS) positions. Staff is working to redescribe the CRS II position and restore the Operations Manager (OM) position. The OM would manage the Reserve Operations staff, manage all logistics and oversee all boat, vehicle, equipment and base camp operations and maintenance programs. The long-term goal would be to have two separate boat crews each with its own boat captain who would be promoted from within.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that he may request the establishment of a working group to develop the CIP request for proposal for the base camp. Potential improvements could be:

- New roofing on all camp buildings except for Hut 10, the dining hall and the galley that have been recently replaced. This project will include gutters and relocating water tanks currently on island to expand the rainwater catchment system in camp.
- Replacement of the current freshwater distribution piping system in camp. All the old piping and replaced with standard piping and valves.
- Replacement of current camp boardwalks with a rot resistant, composite-based material. The current boardwalk has been deteriorating for years and has become a trip hazard.
- Replacement of current window-mounted air-conditioners and heat pumps. Current window AC units are in the KIRC and Base Camp staff huts. These would be replaced with wall-mounted, high efficiency split AC units that are properly sized for the buildings and located to maximize efficiency. These wall units would be tied to high efficiency heat pumps that would significantly reduce energy consumption.
- Replacement of the LZ-1 shelter. The current shelter would either be replaced with a new shelter, or an additional shelter would be installed at LZ-1 for volunteer use. The current shelter was built in the later ‘80’s and is severely deteriorating. The shelter is used by volunteers and the PKO to escape the sun during their lunch breaks as well as to store water for PKO volunteers on their hikes to Pu‘u ‘O Moa‘ula Iki.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the RO unit was not working due to an issue with the pump. Staff was currently working with the vendor who will be sending a new pump. This will be paid for by the trust fund with reimbursement from grant funding. This

issue resulted in the cancellation of all volunteer accesses in June and all accesses in July. The goal was to resume accesses in August.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that Representative Perusso participated in an access in May 2022 and staff received feedback that some members of the House Finance Committee would like to participate in an access after the next legislative session. There was an overnight access scheduled in August for members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

C. Review Expenditures as of May 31, 2021

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that the expenditure report was included in the Commission packet.

There was a break from 11:14 am to 11:19 am. Commissioner Pescaia was excused at 11:15 am.

VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

A. Status Update on Current Commission/Administration Projects

1. KIRC Virtual Museum-Stage 3: Collaborations & Special Collections (IMLS3)

CC Gavagan explained this project is funded by the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services Program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). CC Gavagan explained that a link to the updated Kaho‘olawe Living Library was sent to Commissioners, staff, and the public. The grant project would finish on July 31, 2022, with staff currently working on outreach.

2. KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project (IMLS 4)

PIS Pulver explained that this project was developing a virtual huaka‘i to expand public access through Google Earth. Staff have completed all documentation and photo collection. Audio recording collection have begun with the KIRC staff. Staff anticipated that the pilot would be ready to launch on the new website in August. Previews will be sent to the Commission and other stakeholders before the public live launch. This project has allowed the KIRC to increase its live stream presence on social media and helped to maintain communications capability with Kaho‘olawe.

3. Spreading Aloha Aina Through Community Engagement on Kaho‘olawe (HTA)

PIS Pulver explained this was a general restoration operations project. Staff originally asked for the maximum amount of \$80,000 and were funded half of that. The KIRC received half of the funded amount and will receive the half upon completion of the project. The funding primarily helps to support boat operations for all restoration on island. The project’s activities are primarily placing plants in the ground on island by bringing out 200 volunteers over a year. Unfortunately, with the cancellations of some accesses there was a delay in planting projects. She will be following up with HTA.

Commissioners requested that grant project periods be added to the grant project updates.

B. Status Update on Current Restoration Program Projects:

1. **Hakioawa Operations and Maintenance Plan 2021 (DOH V)**
RPM Higashino explained that the goal of this project was to improve and maintain current irrigation on island and soil erosion structures, planting 5,000 native plants and the re-measuring of soil monitoring data previously collected in 2018 and 2019. To date, 5000 plants have been planted in this area, 20 check dams have been installed, and re-read eight erosion plot transits and staff determined there was reduction of up to 5% in the sediment load in the area. Staff has also taken 28 baseline photo points and seven drone images for comparison to 2019 data. All deliverables have been met, except for the re-monitoring of the baseline photos due to cancellation of trips. He also commented that there may be a future DOH grant; DOH has submitted edits for staff's watershed plan for Kamohio.
2. **Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration of Kahoolawe (CWC)**
ORPM Tokishi reported this grant of \$355,531 runs from January 1, 2022 through August 31, 2024. The grant obligations are to plant 20,000 plants, conduct wildlife surveys, routing of water on the road going into Base Camp and monitoring correlation between the plantings on the beach and coral health in the water through surveys. 2500 native plants have been planted through this reporting period along the coastline of Honokanai'a. There was a volunteer group right now planting plants for this project. This is the grant which was providing the funding for the second ocean staff member for a two-year period.
3. **Soil Enrichment Trials in Degraded Coastal Wetland Areas (Biochar)**
RPM Higashino explained the goal of this Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture-funded project was to enrich the soil in degraded coastal and wetland areas by adding biochar. Nine experimental plots were established using biochar. A thorough analysis was conducted prior to after the trials were completed. Preliminary results of the soil analysis indicated little significant improvement in soil nutrients which may have been due to the lack of rainfall during the last 6-7 months.

Commissioner Case asked staff could not really tell yet about the effectiveness of the biochar because there had not been enough rain yet. RPM Higashino responded that it had been very dry on Kaho'olawe but there had been an increase in the nutrients in areas with the biochar but not significant amounts. Commissioner Case asked if he was saying it was unclear whether the biochar was not effective or if it was due to the lack of rainfall.

PIS Pulver commented that the normal application method of using biochar was altered because of the nature of the KIRC's accesses. Staff needed to modify the implementation in the next round by working it into the soil as is normally done to see if it has the intended effect.

4. **Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project**

RPM Higashino reported that there are currently 20 plants in cultivation. The plants are at the Olinda Rare Plant Facility and at Ho‘olawa Farms, both on Maui. At least 100 plants are needed to start out planting on Kaho‘olawe. The number of partners for this project was increased.

C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Projects:

1. Marine Science Education and Training from a Hawaiian Perspective on Kaho‘olawe: A Pilot Project for Maui Youth (NOAA PIRO Grant)
ORPM Tokishi reported that the reimbursement requested has been placed for this completed project. He read an excerpt written by a high school student, Grace Archer, who participated in the program. Her senior project about Kaho‘olawe was done in correlation with coming to Kaho‘olawe through this grant. She won an award for this project. He quoted part of an email sent to him:

“Your knowledge of the history and ecology of the island revealed so much to me that I never knew about before. But, I think what aided me the most was that sense of responsibility that awakened inside. I wanted to speak about the island because I had discovered kuleana. I was able to go to Kaho‘olawe and learn what I could because it had granted me access there. I didn’t feel trapped while staying there; It was uplifting instead. I thank everyone on the KIRC staff for the life-changing experience I had. I wish you happiness in everything moving forward!”
2. Marine Debris Removal from Kanapou on Kaho‘olawe (NFWF Marine Debris Grant)
ORMP Tokishi reported this project to be conducted from January 2020 to December 2022 will actually cover makai to mauka areas because some of the debris collected at the beaches would be repurposed for sediment reduction mauka. Some of it will be send to O‘ahu for use in generating energy. One cleanup was conducted at Kanapou. Staff and volunteers will be returning in September. The final access and fly out of debris will be done in October. Billing has begun for this grant.
3. Restoring Coastal Wetlands on Kaho‘olawe Island, Hawai‘i (NAWCA Project)
RPM Higashino explained the purpose of this project was to enhance the temporary wetland areas at Keanakeiki and Kealialalo. This will be completed via volunteer labor. Deliverables include removal of alien plant species in the area. Monitoring will be conducted via photo points. Baseline photos were taken in the 20-acre area in Kealialalo. Two volunteer groups have worked at removing alien plant species. Staff and volunteers will be putting in a total of 13,000 plants on both areas. He reported that planting will begin January 2023 in Kealialalo.

Grant status update including grant applications was provided by PIS Pulver including a newly approved IMLS 5 grant which would allow for upgraded technology on island and within the office. The KIRC was also being encouraged to submit a NAWCA Standard

Grant application this year. This proposal will be a partnership with PKO for work in Hakioawa. The request will be for \$300,000-400,000. The maximum amount request is \$1 million. Staff was also working the Island Conservation in preparing a proposal for the America the Beautiful Challenge for around \$4 million to focus on island-wide used nonnative mammal eradication. Staff looking at applying for a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish a Kaho'olawe podcast. Individuals would be interviewed on Kaho'olawe, and the interviews would be included in the podcast. The funding could be used to support island transport and operations.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FYI

Commissioner Pang thanked ED Nāho'opi'i for being on the panel regarding Makua Valley of which he was the moderator. The panel was looking at Kaho'olawe as a guide on how to approach the cleanup of Makua Valley.

The Commission acknowledged the passing of individuals who were in important in the history of Kaho'olawe, its return and the administration of the KIR:

- “Doc” Charles Burrows
- Uncle Bobby Lu'uwai
- Collette Machado

The Commission also recognized the presence of Keoni Fairbanks, the first executive director of the KIRC.

VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS

Commissioner Mataafa thanked the staff for their hard work. He also suggested that the Commission take another look at where the KIRC is at regarding its strategic plan; perhaps looking at the quadrants over the next couple of meetings. The other Commissioners agreed.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:54 am.