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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KIRC Launches Community Work Day Program at its South Maui Property

With its 1993-allocated Federal trust fund projected to sustain on-island operations only through 2016, the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission has begun to focus efforts on building a grassroots support system aimed at strengthening connections with the people of Hawai'i.

In 2002, Governor Linda Lingle set-aside an 8.261-acre parcel in Kihei, Maui for KIRC's future use as an information center, boathouse, and native Hawaiian plant nursery (reference Executive Order No. 3963, executed February 19, 2002). Currently occupied by the KIRC's boathouse and by a section of the South Maui Coastal Heritage Corridor Trail, this property is the new focal point for a series of grants received through the Hawaii Community Foundation, Hawaii Tourism Authority, Atherton Family Foundation and Alu Like, Inc.'s Native Hawaiian Career and Technical Education Program. Over the course of the next 2 years, KIRC will collaborate with its committed partners and extraordinary volunteer base to develop a native plant nursery, traditional hale, walking trail with native plants and interpretive educational signage and a series of educational programs for the public. Ultimately, these projects will set the stage for the development of a Kaho'olawe cultural center on the Kihei property.

“A majority of residents have little knowledge of Kaho'olawe's importance to Hawaiians, and very few have had the opportunity to visit the island as a volunteer,” remarks KIRC Executive Director Mike Nāho'opi'i. Volunteer participation involves a four-day stay on Kaho'olawe with 10-hour work days in the harsh sun and wind to remove non-native and re-plant vegetation, conduct surveys and honor ancient Hawaiian cultural practices. The KIRC has a two-year waiting list for those interested in volunteering and receives innumerable inquiries regarding other opportunities for involvement – exhibiting a clear demand for the experience and education that the Reserve offers. “By creating community work day opportunities on Maui, we aim to strengthen understanding of and connection to Kaho'olawe for countless residents and visitors.”

The first community work day, scheduled for Saturday, January 25th from 8 AM – 12 PM, will focus on clearing invasive brush and grass. To reach the event area, enter the Kihei boat ramp parking lot and follow the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission signage. Closed-toe shoes, long pants and long sleeved shirts are recommended as we will be working in thick brush under kiawe trees. Please bring gloves, water bottles, sun-protection, and snacks.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Kaho'olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund in support of these projects, send your contribution to the KIRC at 811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku HI 96793 or give online at hawaiianwayfund.org (donor designation #130). Every dollar makes a difference.

About the KIRC

The Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) was established by the Hawai‘i State Legislature in 1993 to manage the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve while it is held in trust for a future Native Hawaiian sovereign entity. The KIRC establishes policies and usage of the island and its surrounding waters through comprehensive restoration and monitoring programs. Its Cultural Program integrates a Native Hawaiian cultural perspective into all programs and activities. The organization is managed by a seven-member Commission and a committed staff. For more information, call (808) 243.5020 or visit www.kahoolawe.hawaii.gov.

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