Makahiki Hou!

by Noa Emmett Aluli, M.D.

2008 will see an important transition in the management and leadership of the KIRC as we bid aloha to Sol Kaho’ohalahala, who retired at the beginning of January after three years as our Executive Director.

While we are in the process of retaining a new permanent Executive Director, the management of the KIRC is being led by a Transition Team comprised of Interim Executive Director Michele McLean, Deputy Director Ka‘ōnohi Lee, Deputy Attorney General Rowena Somerville, and Policy Advisor for Government Affairs Ray “Kalä” Enos. The Commission is working closely with this pa‘a group, as we head into 2008 facing a number of major interrelated events, including:

- Placement of a new Executive Director
- Redefinition of our current organizational structure
- Update / revision of the Strategic Plan
- Planning and enacting a new budget for Fiscal Year 2009
- Seating of two new Commissioners to represent Native Hawaiian organizations and the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, as the terms of Commissioners Burrows and Lu‘uwai are due to expire at the end of June

Over the first few months of the new year, the Commission will hold its regular monthly meetings as well as additional workshops to plan and focus on our organizational structure, strategic priorities and budget policies. An updated, revised Strategic Plan will guide our staffing and budgetary needs for the next few years by driving our staff reorganization/redefinition and Fiscal Year 2009 budget. These three interrelated actions will set the course for the KIRC’s management of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve, the restoration and protection of Kanaloa, and the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian culture, rights and practices in the years to come.

What can we achieve, how much can we accomplish, how far can we reach in these upcoming years? With a new Strategic Plan, backed by a strong and a balanced staff, and a sound and responsible budget, the possibilities are infinite. This recalls two ‘ōlelo no‘eau:

-he lawai ‘a no ke kai papa ‘u, he pokole ke aho;
-he lawai ‘a no ke kai hohonu, he loa ke aho – a fisherman in shallow seas uses only a short line; a fisherman of the deep sea uses a long line – meaning that we will reach only as far as we aim and prepare ourselves to reach, and onipa‘a – be steadfast – the motto of Queen Lili‘uokalani, take a stand, do what is right. In this new year of 2008, we will prepare ourselves, we will aim far, and we will remain unwavering in our commitment to the restoration and preservation of Kaho‘olawe and its natural and cultural resources.
‘O Lonoikamakahiki
The Season of Lono

Makahiki season is the “Thanksgiving for Kanaka Maoli” and honors the god Lono. As a god of medicine, Lono had a particular interest in keeping herbs and medicinal plants flourishing. Lono presided over the Makahiki season – when war ceased and taxes were paid to the ali‘i. Cultural practitioners in Hawai‘i understand the deity Lono to be one of the four principal gods in the Hawaiian pantheon. Lono is the god of agriculture, peace, fertility, games, communication and medicine. The manifestation of Lono associated with the Makahiki is called, fittingly, Lono-i-ka-Makahiki. Many chants are done in honor of this season and for the god Lono. With the sounds of the coming winter rains, the ua Näulu reaches from Ulupalakua in the cloud formation shapes of Keaopanopano (dark billowing clouds) and Keaopöpolohua (dark purplish cloud clusters). The kilohökü, who knew the stars and the signs of these seasons, would mark the rising of the Makali‘i (the star cluster Pleiades) at sunset and, on that sign, declare that the season of the Makahiki had come. Chants accompanying great pahu drums joined their deep voices in proclaiming the season:

Oli no Lonoikamakahiki

K‘eki‘e mai nei ‘o ua lani nei
‘O ua lani nei ho‘i
Kēia ke hemo nei ka Manawa i ka lani
Ke halulu nei ka piko i lalo
Ke ‘api nei ka halo, ka maha, ka po‘o o ka honua
Uā mai kini ka mana a ke akua
Huli aku la ke alo ke akua i ka lewa
Huli aku la ke‘ehi iā Kahiki
Hō mai ka hō ‘ano kapu a Lono
Ō mai i loko a hiki a hō‘ano
‘O‘ili‘ili mai ke kinoiau o Lono
Ka huli mai ke kino a ke akua
Ka huli mai i loko o māewa lani
Kani ka po‘o i loko papa iā mea
Hōmai ka po‘o a ka pu‘a‘a
Ke akua loa, ke akua poko
‘O Lonoikamakahiki e

would pause, and ho‘okupu (offering) from the harvest – vegetables and food animals, feather work ‘ahu ‘ula (cloaks) and mahiole (helmets), fine kapa (bark cloth) and moena (woven mats), ‘umeke (calabashes and bowls), ‘upena (fishing nets) and tools and implements - would be gathered and placed before the image. These ho‘okupu were then accepted and made sacred to Lono by kāhuna (priests).

Many seasonal celebrations were held in praise of Lono. Sports champions from all districts would gather for Makahiki games such as mokomoko, häkökö, heihei and ‘o‘o ihe which required physical skills; other games – ‘ōlelo nane, hula, and haku mele – relied on a person’s wit and oratory. At sea there were he‘e nalu, heihei wa‘a, and heihei competitions. Nā kanaka would enjoy these contests, crowding around the gaming fields and climbing coconut trees for a better vantage point, then chanting to exalt their champions. Victorious contestants became the sources of stories for months and Makahiki to come. Even today, school children throughout Hawai‘i learn and participate in games of the Makahiki such as ulu maika, kōnane, hei and pā uma, learning the significance of the season as well as the fun of competition.

Although more serious rites and protocols of the Makahiki were practiced only in secret for decades, today there is a resurgence of interest in revitalizing this essential component of the Hawaiian celebration of the seasons. On the island of Kaho‘olawe, kanaka maoli in traditional attire engage in reestablishing the protocol of the times at the start and closing of the Makahiki season. As we near the end of the Makahiki we call to mind all that nature has provided and the cultural awareness of our kūpuna; it is a protocol of peace and of a confirmation of a Hawaiian link to the natural world.

Glossary

Lono - one of the four principal gods of Hawaiian religion. Lono is the god of agriculture, peace, fertility, games, communication and medicine. The manifestation of Lono associated with the Makahiki is called, aptly, Lono-i-ka-Makahiki.

kilo hökü - astronomer, one who read the portents of the night sky. Kilo=examine; hökü=star.
kahuna - (kāhuna in plural form) skilled practitioner, often of priestly class. Many kinds of kāhuna are known, including kahuna lā‘au lapa‘au (practitioners of herbal medicine) and kahuna kilo hökü (astronomers and seers).
A basaltic adze from Kaho‘olawe has verified the authenticity of Hawaiian oral histories and chants that have for millennia spoken of heroic voyages crossing thousands of miles of open ocean in purposeful settlement of the last outposts of human migration – the islands of Eastern Polynesia, Hawai‘i and Rapa Nui.

Virtually unchanged through generations, these historical narratives were categorically dismissed by Western science as so much fiction. But that outright dismissal is no longer possible, thanks to the challenges presented to Western thought by the voyaging canoe Höküle‘a, and now, through a definitive new study by Kenneth D. Collerson and Marshall I. Weisler of Australia's University of Queensland at St. Lucia.

In a December presentation to the KIRC Commissioners, Dr. Weisler explained that their study centered on a belief that the isotopes of volcanic basalt rock would carry unique chemical signatures traceable to their sources. Collerson and Weisler examined 19 basaltic adzes collected in the Tuamotu Archipelago between 1929-34 by renowned Bishop Museum anthropologist Kenneth Emory. “Because the Tuamotus are coral atolls,” said Dr. Weisler, “no naturally occurring volcanic stone exists in those islands.” But the sheer number of adzes found there would suggest that the Tuamotus were “a major crossroads in Eastern Polynesia.”


One particular adze, classified as C.7727, found on the island of Napuka, “was chemically traced to Kaho‘olawe – specifically, we think, to Kealaikahiki – and carried a minimum of 2,500 miles,” Weisler said. Quarried from Kaho‘olawe’s fine-grained basalt, “the adze is not finished in a typical Hawaiian style but shaped in a Tuamotu design, suggesting that it was taken as ballast or as a gift or trade item and later shaped in the Tuamotus.” Also found in the Tuamotus “were adzes from Pitcairn and Tahiti, revealing an amazing amount of trade, that Polynesians were in contact with each other more than 3,000 years ago, and that they participated in the longest documented prehistoric trip of the human species.”

Faced at last with the “hard evidence” of multi-directional voyages between and among the island cultures of the Polynesian triangle, the world now must also admit to the veracity of the long-denied ancient oral histories and to the extraordinary role Kaho‘olawe played in the epic voyages and extensive ancient trade of Hawai‘i’s kūpuna.

This fine-grained basaltic adze, C.7727, geochemically identified as originating from Kealaikahiki, Kaho‘olawe, was found 2,500 away on Napuka Island. (Adze photos used by permission of Betty Lou Kam, Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.)
Renewing the Palapala ‘Aelike Kahu‘aina

The Palapala ‘Aelike Kahu‘aina or Stewardship Agreement between the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission, nearing the end of its second year in April 2008, has been extended for six months to September 2008. This extension will allow the ‘Ohana and the Commission to review the accomplishments under the agreement and how to expand and improve areas of joint responsibility before signing a new two-year agreement.

Restoration efforts under the agreement were reviewed in December 2007. These included:

Reconstruction of the Hale Häläwai in Hakioawa: Hakioawa is the primary traditional settlement area on Kaho‘olawe and center of the ‘Ohana activities. The original hale, which was built by hand in the 1980’s, began to deteriorate after 20 years in the natural elements. The ‘Ohana brought in ‘ōhi’a logs from Hawai‘i Island and pili grass from the Moloka‘i Plant Materials Center and organized approximately 600 volunteers in the reconstruction of the Hale. The Hale will serve as the primary place to gather for cultural and educational learning and discussions. It will hopefully be the first of many more traditional hale pili structures on Kaho‘olawe.


Stabilizing Moa‘ulaiki: In January 2008, ‘Ohana members and KIRC staff cleared and stabilized Moa‘ulaiki, the second highest peak and sacred wahi pana of the island. Koa haole were cut and sprayed with garlon. Ironwood trees were cut down and placed in gullies for erosion control.

Clearing an Alaloa: In January 2007 and January 2008 the ‘Ohana and KIRC staff cleared a coral-lined trail from Kealaikahiki to Keanakeiki in preparation for the annual closing of Makahiki ceremonies. They also scoped out and marked a trail to connect Kealaikahiki to Honokanai‘a. This will enable easier access to the Kuhike‘e platform for the training of navigators. Over the next few years the ‘Ohana and KIRC will work on clearing an alaloa or around-the-island trail which will connect all of the ‘ili. Between Hakioawa and Kuhe‘eia the ‘Ohana has already cleared a coastal trail extending one-quarter mile past Hakioawaiki.

Revegetation Phase II: The ‘Ohana completed Phase II of a Department of Land and Natural Resources grant-in-aid in 2007. This involved the expansion of the catchment surface for the Wailuna water tank that was installed during Phase I in 1990; relining and reinforcing the Wailuna water tank; re-installing the drip irrigation system from the Wailuna tank down to the valley bottom; and the planting of native species in Hakioawa such as naupaka, ‘a‘ali‘i and ‘aki‘aki grass.
The healing of Kanaloa continues thanks, in no small part, to the very hard work of our volunteers. Native grasses and shrubs were planted, irrigation lines laid, holes dug, previous plantings inspected, roads improved, pili erosion barriers laid and our ocean resources monitored – all making a positive difference in the restoration of Kaho'olawe. Mahalo to all.

October, 2007 – December 31, 2007 Volunteers

Daniel Adams
Aaron Adams
January Asbury
William Bennett
Diana Bowman
Alex Bowman
Hulali Brown
Kimbery Brown
Andrew Carson
Norma Clothier
County of Hawai'i
Jennifer Crummer
Charlene Dierking
James Dierking
Justin Dipaola-Allen
Donovon Domingo
Judy Duval
Glynnes Ebisui
Judy Edwards
Sandra Florence
Amy Froemsdorf
Connie Froemsdorf
Jim Gale
Forrest Gale
Lora Gale
Chris Gilbert
Girl's Court
Herman Goldman
Christine Hahn
Hālau Mele
Hālau Nā Hanona Kūlike o Pi'ilani
Jeff Halford
Jackson Halford
Tyler Hayashi
Kiki Hee
Travis Hewahewa
Nani Higashino
Lihi Higashino

Kawelu Higashino
Torben Hjorting
Prudence Hokoana-Gormley
Matt Janiec
Blossom Kawahara
Kamalana Kobayashi
Elizabeth Kodis
Malio Kodis
Kevin Korach
Po Denise La Costa
Anne Marie LaRosa
Allan Ligon
Joan Mckelvey
Fran Mitsumura
Sue Moore
James Moriarty
Nā Limahana o Kanaloa
Lorna Omori
Frances O'Reilly
Anna Palomino
Kūhea Paracuelles
Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana
Lisa Raymond
Starr Rittie-Camara
Nicholas Schaffer
Alexander Schaffer
Martha Schaffer
Adele Shintaku
Jonelle Shintaku
Bryce Shintaku
Christopher Taylor
Nicholas Turner
Julie Vermaas
Joseph Wallace
Julia Williams
Malia Williams
Kolea Zimmerman
Naupaka Zimmerman

Volunteer Program

Kükulu Ke Ea a Kanaloa
Kaho’olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund

Contributions of money or property to the Kaho’olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund may be deducted as charitable contributions in computing taxable income so long as those donations are used exclusively for public purposes.*

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Please make check payable to the Kaho'olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund and mail, with this form, to 811 Kolu Street, Suite 201, Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793 Telephone (808) 243-5020 Fax (808) 243-5885

‘Ae! I'd like to receive the KIRC newsletter, Ko Hema Lamalama, by e-mail and help reduce the Trust's printing, postage and handling expenses.

Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden
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MAHALO TO OUR SPONSORS

Commissioners and Staff of the KIRC would like to take this opportunity to send our heartfelt mahalo a nui loa to the following individuals and companies who so generously contributed to preserving the special heritage of Kaho'olawe.

A very special mahalo to Mrs. Joan D. Pedro of Madison, Wisconsin whose most generous gift was made in honor and memory of her late husband, former Kaho'olawe Island resident, David K. Pedro. Mahalo to Paul Michaelson & Banana Boat Sunscreen for their contribution of sunscreen for our on-island volunteers; to Iolani Kaniho and the Lahaina-Ka'anapali & Pacific Railroad for their contribution of two wheel assemblies now in use as a boat mooring in the Kaho'olawe Reserve; and, to Patricia K. Brandt of Kapolei for her generous contribution. Mahalo for keeping the dream alive!

KIRC QUICK NOTES …

Ho'omaika'i i la Kalei Tsuha, former KIRC Culture & Education Coordinator/Specialist! Tsuha has successfully defended her Master's of Arts thesis, “Kaulana Mahina: He ‘Ohaehana ‘Alemanaka Hawai‘i” (“Moon Calendar: A Hawaiian Almanac System”). Her thesis, written in ‘Ōlelo Makuahine as was her entire defense, drew upon original Hawaiian documents detailing how Kaulana Mahina was used as a scientific system of knowledge integrating all aspects of Hawaiian existence. Her committee members included Puakea Nogelmeier, Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, Naomi Losch and Kaliko Baker. Tsuha’s accomplishment is especially historic: the first graduate of the UH Mānoa Hawaiian Language MA program defended her thesis on October 22, 2007 – the 17th anniversary of the stopping of the bombing of Kaho'olawe! Aloha ‘Āina!

“Doc” Burrows named Living Treasure
KIRC Commissioner Dr. Charles P.M.K. “Doc” Burrows has been named among the Honpa Hongwanji Mission’s 2008 Living Treasures. The 32-year old program recognizes outstanding individuals for their contributions to the preservation and perpetuation of the islands’ distinctive cultural and artistic heritage.