



KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA
KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION

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DRAFT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Friday, April 30, 2021

1:30 pm

Online via ZOOM and livestreamed via YouTube

COMMISSION MEMBERS

PRESENT: Joshua Kaakua, E.D., Chairperson; Carmen Hulu Lindsey, Vice-Chair; Suzanne Case; Jon Ching; Saumalu Mataafa; Michelle Pescaia

EXCUSED: Hōkūlani Holt

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); Lyman Abbott, Natural Resources Specialist (NRS); James Bruch (NRS); Courtney Kerr, Ocean Resources Specialist (ORS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM); Paul Higashino, Restoration Program Manager (RPM); Cassie Smith, Volunteer Coordinator (VC); Carmela Noneza, GIS/LAN Specialist (GIS/LAN)

GUESTS: 'Ānela Evans; Benton Kealii Pang; Kylee Mar, Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO); Manuel Kuloloio

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm. Roll call was conducted and quorum was established with six Commissioners. Chair Kaakua welcomed the two individuals who were nominated by Governor Ige to replace outgoing Commissioners Ching and Holt, 'Ānela Evans and Benton Kealii Pang. Both were confirmed by the Senate. He invited them to introduce themselves.

Dr. Benton Kealii Pang is a biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and will be representing Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHO), specifically the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. He is President of the O'ahu Council of Hawaiian Civic Clubs.

Ms. 'Ānela Evans is from Lāna'i and is a cultural practitioner/cultural resources specialist for the Four Seasons Resorts Lāna'i. She will be representing the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO). Prior to working for the Four Seasons she worked with Pulama Lāna'i in conservation and natural resource management as well as working for the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of September 21, 2020 Regular Commission Meeting

MOTION: Vice Chair Lindsey moved to approve the minutes of September 21, 2020 regular Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pescaia.

Discussion: Commissioner Mataafa requested that his last name be corrected in the minutes. Staff will make the correction before posting the final version.

ACTION: The motion was unanimously approved via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Ching-aye; Vice Chair Lindsey-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Review and Approve Proposed CY 2021 Access Dates and Activities for the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana

ED Nāho‘opi‘i requested that the Commission approve the proposed access dates and activities for 2021 as requested by the PKO and outlined in the memo included the Commission packet. He reviewed the definitions of terminology for authorized activities, stewardship agreement authorized activities as well as KIRC approved and authorized activities. He noted that the status of volunteers was determined by the Department of the Attorney General.

MOTION: Commissioner Mataafa moved to approve the proposed access dates and activities for the 2021 calendar year requested by the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana as KIRC approved and authorized activities. Commissioner Ching seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that he had already administratively approved the access dates which had already passed.

ACTION: The motion was unanimously approved via roll call: Commissioner Case-aye; Commissioner Ching-aye; Vice Chair Lindsey-aye; Commissioner Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Chair Kaakua-aye.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Legislative Update

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained the only bill directly concerning Kaho‘olawe was Senate Bill 691, Relating to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission, which would have administratively attached the KIRC to OHA rather than Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). Most of the submitted testimony for this bill was in opposition and the bill was deferred.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i also explained the conference draft (CD1) of House Bill 200, Relating to the State Budget was passed and submitted to the Governor. Staff was still waiting for the worksheets to be released. The KIRC had to propose a 20% cut and two positions had to be eliminated. The two positions were put back in through a House amendment but were taken out again by a Senate amendment. Staff was not sure the positions were returned in the conference draft; staff is waiting for the worksheets to be released to verify if they were returned.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the Governor’s Messages regarding the nominations of Commissioners Pescaia, Evans and Pang were well supported. All nominations were confirmed.

B. Grants Update

PIS Pulver provided an update on the status of grants—awarded and under review. The update was also provided in the Commission packet.

State funded projects included:

- Reducing Excessive Sedimentation and Habitat Restoration in Kamōhio Watershed of Kaho‘olawe (under review)
- Hakioawa Watershed DOH 4-Operations and Maintenance (awarded and scheduled to start in FY22)

The KIRC completed a short grant project funded through KUPU via the CARES Act Funding from the state—KUPU ‘Āina Corp Internship Program. Interns assisted on Kaho‘olawe as well as on Maui.

Grant funded projects in progress included:

- KIRC Virtual Museum Stage 3: Collaborations and Special Collections (IMLS) which was extended through July 31, 2022
- Marine Science Education and Training from a Hawaiian Perspective on Kaho‘olawe (NOAA mini grant) through October 31, 2021
- Marine Debris Removal from Kanapou on Kaho‘olawe (NOAA/NFWF) through December 30, 2022
- Engaging Hawai‘i communities through Kaho‘olawe’s culture, history and coastal restoration (Cooke Foundation-Maui) through December 30, 2021

The KIRC was recently awarded a grant from North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) U.S. Small Grants for a project entitled Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration on Kahoolawe, HI. The grant was for \$100,000 over two years. The budget includes funding for boat transportation to conduct the project. It was expected to be formally awarded in July 2021.

Submitted grant applications included:

- KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project (IMLS, Native American/Native Hawaiian Services-\$98,405)

- Improving Water Reliability through Infrastructure: Modernization of the Honokanai‘a Base Camp Distribution System (WaterSMART Small Scale Efficiency Projects-Bureau of Reclamation-\$75,000)
- Increasing Safe, Meaningful Access To Kaho‘olawe Through Physically Distanced Outdoor Learning (BWET Hawai‘i-\$150,000)

Grant applications still in progress include:

- Coastal Wetland Restoration in Honokanai‘a and Honukanae (National Coastal Wetlands Restoration Program-\$300,000-\$500,000)
- Upland Mauka Wetland Restoration (NAWCA Standard Grants-up to \$1 million over two years)

Commissioner Mataafa expressed his gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work in pursuing grant funding. Chair Kaakua also expressed his mahalo for the hardworking staff.

C. Executive Director’s Report

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that there had been an upward trend during the last two years toward increasing the KIRC’s general fund appropriations, especially for operations. However, during the FY2020 legislative session the KIRC lost \$100,000 because it was not part of the baseline during the first biennium. With the advent of COVID-19, the KIRC is back at \$212,000 for the new biennium along with a reduction based on a program review conducted last summer. As a result, staff has been seeking external funding sources to help offset base camp and operations costs.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported there were no budget variances. The KIRC continues to operate under budget.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the KIRC was slowly bringing volunteers back to Kaho‘olawe. Focus was on Maui based groups. Staff will reevaluate volunteer accesses after May 11.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained Commissioners Holt and Ching were finishing their terms on June 30, 2021. Commissioner Pescaia will be starting a new three-year term. ED Nāho‘opi‘i requested that the new Commissioners send copies of their oaths of office to the KIRC office for their files after they have been sworn in and the oaths notarized.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the KIRC lost funding for two positions from general funding, Cultural Resources Project Coordinator (CRPC) and UXO/Safety Specialist, because they were unfilled. Staff will try to get CRPC funding through grant funding or request funding from the legislature next year. The KIRC will have funding through a Department of Health (DOH) grant for a KIRC Specialist II.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained current COVID-19 procedures for Kaho‘olawe:

- Reduction in the number of volunteers on island
- Half of the beds are blocked off in the volunteer huts in Base Camp
- Focus has been on Maui-based volunteers due to interisland travel restrictions

- Twice daily sanitation of high touch areas in Base Camp; this will be reduced to daily sanitation of common touch areas and general cleaning at the end of the day conducted by the volunteers, in compliance with new CDC guidelines
- 2-gallon jugs are being issued to each volunteer to reduce cross contamination of drinking water

Staff will reevaluate COVID-19 protocols and procedures when the governor ends the statewide mask mandate.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the KIRC was in its last year of the Native Dryland Forest CIP Project which meant that the funding for Base Camp operations will come from the KIRC’s trust fund. A new Base Camp contract was awarded to Dawson based upon best price. The new contract included a reduction in manpower. The contract was for \$453,695 which included cost of the workforce to maintain Base Camp and make repairs, all meals, kitchen cleaning supplies and meal preparation. The KIRC will pay for the cost of repair supplies. The number of volunteers was reduced in this contract to 10 volunteers per trip due to food costs. Adjustments may be made in the future.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the ‘Ōhua hit a reef off Kealaikahiki on Monday. A wave hit the boat on the side and pushed it toward shore. It clipped the edge of a rock where the keel and the stern of the boat meet. It opened a four-inch hole. The bilge alarm was activated. Both bilge pumps were engaged but could not maintain the inflow. The crew reached Honokanai‘a as quickly as they could and were able to offload everyone and all the supplies. The crew took the boat back out to locate the leak which was difficult due to the incoming sand. They beached the boat and continued to look for the hole. They utilized large trucks to pull the boat over to the other side and located the hole. They plugged the hole with wooden wedges and eventually lowered the inflow rate. A crew of three was able to get the boat back into the water and back to the Kīhei Boat Ramp. NOAA dispatched their vessel to extract the volunteers. The vessel escorted the ‘Ōhua back after taking the KIRC volunteers back to Kīhei Boat Ramp. Staff was currently in communication with a boat welder regarding repairs. Staff thought the cost would be approximately \$15,000. The Coast Guard was notified. Staff submitted an accident report. ED Nāho‘opi‘i was working on an ocean investigation.

Commissioner Mataafa asked if the Commission needed to approve the expense of the repair. ED Nāho‘opi‘i replied no; the KIRC already had encumbered a contract with a welder. Additionally, the executive director has the authority to expend up to \$50,000 without Commission approval.

VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

- A. Status Update on Current and Planned Restoration Projects: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) II; North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant; Hakioawa Operations and Maintenance Plan (State of Hawai‘i Department of Health, Clean Water Branch grant); Kanaloa plant update; plant cover and native seed regeneration survey in fire plots**
- RPM Paul Higashino reported CIP work was conducted between September 2020 through March 2021. COVID restrictions reduced the number of volunteers which also reduced the number of plants being planted from 2,000 to 200-250 plants.

There was an extended rainy period in March on Kaho‘olawe, so volunteers helped with maintenance around Base Camp.

There was a faunal restoration group meeting in December. The KIRC was working with Island Conservation regarding budget and project feasibility.

There was a Kanaloa plant management meeting during which there was a discussion about plant distribution. A further discussion will be held on May 17th.

Three study plots within the burn area of the February 2020 fire were established in April 2020. In February 2021 staff returned to the plots and found the alien grasses which were dominant in those areas prior to the fire were the main vegetation that recovered. Some of the plots had ilima, uhaloa, koali, but there was insignificant response from native plants. In plots where staff put out a‘ali‘i, naio, and ma‘o there had been no recovery or regeneration of the native plants.

Staff also maintained the water catchment systems. Leaks were found in two of the tanks. Tanks 1 & 2 can hold only half of their capacity—200,000 gallons. Tank 3’s capacity was 80,000 but now can now hold only 70,000 gallons. This is due to the wear and tear of the tanks as well as the environmental factors, including dust and salt air.

Staff also collected whatever native seeds were in season and would continue to do so during the summer.

B. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Projects: NOAA PIRO Marine Educational Training (MET) Grant; Marine Science Education and Training from a Hawaiian Perspective on Kaho‘olawe: A Pilot Program for Maui Youth; NOAA NFWF Nets to Energy Marine Debris Removal Grant: Removal of Derelict Fishing Gear from Keoneuli Beach Kanapou Bay on Kaho‘olawe, Hawai‘i; Cooke Foundation Grant: engaging Hawai‘i communities through Kaho‘olawe culture, history and coastal restoration; coastal restoration; homemade fish aggregation device (FAD) removal; In water surveys and data collection

ORPM Dean Tokishi reported the KIRC partnered with Maui High School (MHS) to work on the NOAA PIRO grant of \$15,000 in which the focus was on MHS marine science classes and providing opportunities for field work for aspiring marine scientists. The KIRC received an extension due to COVID-19. Staff was working coordinating three student accesses to Kaho‘olawe. Staff and students have done coastal plantings and staff also conducted classroom lectures.

The KIRC also worked on a NOAA Marine Debris grant of \$76,000 requiring the removal of at least five tons of marine debris from Kanapou or Keoneuli. This grant will end in December 2022. This project was unique from previous debris removal because the debris will be diverted from Maui’s landfill; it will either be utilized for soil erosion control on Kaho‘olawe or shipped to O‘ahu’s H Power plant to help generate energy.

The Ocean Program was also working on a Cooke Foundation grant of \$18,000 which will end in December 2021. Staff and volunteers will place a minimum of 6500 native plants along the coastline of Honokanai‘a and Honukanaeae to help with erosion control.

Ocean Program staff and volunteers planted 3,618 native plants along the shoreline from September 2020 through March 2021. The majority were ‘aki‘aki grass due to its success along the coastline.

In March 2021, staff removed a homemade fish aggregation device (FAD) off Keanakeiki. It did do some damage to the reef. The net was repurposed for an art project by an individual who contacted the KIRC.

Ocean staff continued to conduct coral monitoring as well as installation of sediment traps to determine the effects of coastal plantings and soil erosion mitigation on the reefs.

C. Status Update on Current Commission Projects: Kahoolawe Virtual Museum Stage 3: Collaborations & Special Collections

CC Gavagan confirmed that the KIRC was given an extension by IMLS until July 31, 2022 to complete this project. Staff was currently cataloging 300 sample projects in the PastPerfect database. The Commission, KIRC staff and project consultants would be given a link to the new KIRC Living Library website once all the sample objects were published in the new website for evaluation.

D. Public Information Specialist (PIS) Outreach and Media Update

PIS Pulver reported that it was difficult to conduct in person outreach due to COVID-19. In October 2020, the KIRC participated in ReTree Hawai‘i at the boat house in which the KIRC was gifted approximately 60 plants from Native Nursery. Staff and volunteers also laid in some new irrigation over by the hale and the plants are being watered regularly and doing well. Staff was working on some summer programs at the boat house. The KIRC also had a fund-raising activity with Flatbread Pizza Company. It raised about \$100 more than the last time. It also resulted in more donations through Kindness.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i was interviewed by the Maui News for Earth Day. PIS Pulver did an interview with a small start-up podcast in California. An artist will be coming out during the summer to do an art piece for the Honolulu Museum of Art.

The KIRC spring newsletter was ready to go to print. The KIRC Annual Report was also distributed.

The Hawaiian Canoe Club wanted to finish the hale at the boat house. Papahana Kuaola would be at the boat house for one month to run a series of week-long summer camps. A cohort would consist of ten children (3rd-8th grade) and come three days out of the week in the morning. It would be a mauka to makai interactive camp and serve as a pilot project to see what activities engage children to help tailor the curriculum design with Kaumali‘i Elementary in the next two years.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i asked Commissioner Mataafa if there was a way to gain entry in the Maui Raceway again. The KIRC uses to be able to bring a roll-off container to the Maui Raceway, fly the marine debris to the Maui Raceway and drop it in the container. The Maui Raceway organization changed, and staff was unsure of how to contact them. OPM Tokishi will contact Commissioner Mataafa to follow up.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FYI

Chair Kaakua stated he was impressed with the staff’s reports, grant writing, and was appreciative of the update regarding the kanaloa plant since it was a symbol of Kaho‘olawe. He suggested that there could be another discussion about the kanaloa plant when Dr. Pang joined the Commission.

The Commission thanked all staff for their hard work.

VIII. NEXT MEETINGS AND FOLLOW UPS

The Commission decided that there would be another KIRC meeting before the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2021) so that the budget could be reviewed and approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28 pm.

DRAFT