Welcome to Ko Hema Lamalama, the newsletter of the Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve. Uncle Harry Mitchell interpreted this name as the southern beacon, which served as a source of light to weary travelers voyaging beyond the pillars of Kahiki. Let Ko Hema Lamalama aid us in sharing a source of light from Kahoʻolawe and the restoration of Hawaiian culture across Hawaiʻi nei. This issue is made possible by supporters like you. Mahalo for helping us share Kahoʻolawe.
The KIRC has faced many challenges this year which has forced staff to develop new priorities and procedures to keep our mission alive. The impact of the COVID-19 virus has significantly affected on-island operations and required staff to adapt new sanitation and isolation procedures. This past summer volunteer accesses were cancelled as we worked with the Base Camp staff to implement new sanitation and food service procedures that are in compliance with CDC and State guidance on COVID-19 prevention. In August of this year, we were able to successfully test these new procedures and restore volunteer access to the Honokanaia Base Camp.

Due to the new procedures, we are learning to continue our mission with new restrictions limiting our capacity to conduct restoration activities. Some of these restrictions include: reduced number of volunteers each access to maintain proper social distancing and limiting volunteer groups, as much as possible, to those from Maui County to comply with the state and county quarantine rules. In spite of these limitations, we are still making headway in developing new planting areas and planting techniques which can be accomplished with these smaller workforces. The KIRC is also looking to expand its virtual reach by holding commission meetings on-line and participating in on-line educational and outreach activities.

These new challenges as a result of COVID-19 are just another set of the continuing challenges we have faced in the healing of Kahoʻolawe. We have many years of experience adapting the way we work with limited resources. For us at the KIRC, we are always striving forward no matter the challenges we face.
Kilo (observation) is an essential skill on Kaho‘olawe. KIRC volunteers are often brought to Sailor’s Hat (above) to kilo and share their unique perspective on what the site can teach us. This large man-made crater is the result of three separate detonations of 500 tons of TNT (left) that were used to simulate the effects of a nuclear blast on the Pacific Fleet.

Photopoints allow KIRC staff to document, track and evaluate observations of natural and environmental phenomenon.
This year also marked thirty years of healing on Kaho‘olawe. After a decades long struggle by the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and the loss of James Kimo Mitchell and George Jarrett Helm Jr., two of its members, the use of Kaho‘olawe as a live fire training and bombing range was officially halted on October 22, 1990 with an executive order from President George Bush.
October brings the start of the KIRC planting season on Kahoʻolawe, which is ushered in by the Kāholo Ka Lani ceremony on the Kāne moon. Practitioners from the Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana, supported by KIRC staff, offer oli, mele and hoʻokupu at each of the rain koʻa to honor Kāne and call on the Nāulu rain cloud that originates on Maui at Honuaʻula and stretches across the ocean to Kahoʻolawe.

“Apart of the uniqueness of Ceremony on Kahoʻolawe is the opportunity to not be distracted.”
~ Hōkūlani Holt, KIRC Commissioner

Ipu a Kāne, the koʻa pictured here (left) can be found on the eastern rim of Lua Makika on Kahoʻolawe, and is one of three that were built in modern times specifically to request the increase of rain on Kahoʻolawe. A fourth was constructed on Maui at Puʻu Mahoe in ʻUlupalakua on Maui to gather the Nāulu wind and rain and send them over to Kahoʻolawe.

Ahu are Hawaiian altars, shrines or cairns, built of stone for spiritual and ceremonial purposes. Most often they serve as sites for humans to offer hoʻokupu to activities or gods. Koʻa are one form of ahu with a very specific function: to ask for the multiplying of something.

Ka Hei Hei O Nā Keiki (Orion’s Belt) constellation in the sky over Honokanai’a (bottom left). Nāulu Rain Cloud extending from ʻUlupalakua on Maui towards Kahoʻolawe (bottom right).
Volunteers Return

With COVID-19 safety and sanitation protocols in place and practiced, the KIRC staff was able to welcome volunteers back to Kahoʻolawe in August! Adhering to the CDC guidelines for health and safety though means the groups are smaller in number these days, but they are still mighty in their force. In the last few months, Maui-based volunteers have helped to: reintroduce thousands of native plants in mauka and makai project areas; bag and transport thousands of pounds of pōhaku (rock) to build kīpuka (oasis) on bare hardpan; collect and spread seeds from native plants currently thriving on island.

Clockwise from top:
- Volunteers outplanting native species in the mauka (left) and coastal (right) restoration projects.
- Volunteer helping to spread ʻaʻaliʻi seed collected on island in the kīpuka built mauka in the dryland forest project site.
- Volunteer spreading hau, naio and milo seeds collected in base camp in the stream bed in Honokanai’a.
- Volunteers collecting and bagging pōhaku used for building kīpuka.
- Volunteers collecting seed from around the KIRC water catchment on Kahoʻolawe.
- Volunteers laying out pōhaku in the natural indentations on the hardpan where water will flow naturally during times of rain.
- Volunteer and KIRC staff collecting ʻaʻaliʻi seed pods.
The KIRC partnered with KUPU as a host site for the KUPU ʻĀina Corps (KAC) program, a initiative funded by the CARES Act that provided temporary employment for those who have been furloughed or are unemployed due to COVID-19.

With staff and volunteer numbers limited by COVID-19 safety guidelines, the Restoration Program has continued to use the pōhaku (rock) mound kīpuka method for mauka outplantings. Restoration Program Manager, Paul Higashino chooses natural indentations where wai (fresh water) will collect and flow during hoʻolio (wet season), nourishing the native plants.
Logistics Specialist Grant Thompson setting a sediment trap in Honokanai’a bay (below). Ocean Resource Specialist Courtney Kerr conducting coral transects in Honokanai’a (right).

The KIRC Ocean Program has begun experimenting with new erosion control methods along the coastal beaches in Kealaikahiki, utilizing natural materials in the area, such as pōhaku (rock) and kiawe logs.

The KIRC Ocean staff recently installed sediment traps and conducted a reef survey in Honokanai’a before heading into ho’olio (wet) season, when heavy rains can carry large sediment loads from mauka to makai. Results from the survey will be used to assess current coral and fish populations, and also serve as a baseline for any seasonal change.
Mahalo to our current Members and Donors!

Individual donations are critical to the KIRC’s efforts to protect, restore and preserve Kaho‘olawe. Consider becoming a member today!

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Aloha Kahoʻolawe

Aloha Kahoʻolawe is a campaign to support restoration and access. We invite participation via membership, partnerships and legislative support. By building consensus that there is value in the historical, cultural, ecological and community building resources shared through Kahoʻolawe, we aim to share this special place now and for generations to come.

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Over a decade ago, KIRC staff observed this mass of ʻiwa birds taking flight from Molokini. Early this year, KIRC staff spotted a large flock of ʻiwa circling overhead while aboard the ʻŌhua. Ocean Program Manager Dean Tokishi captured the crew’s observation in the photo on the previous page! How many you can find?

The Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) is a 170(c)1 government nonprofit, authorized per IRS Publication 557, to receive tax-deductible contributions to programs that serve a public purpose. Donors should always consult with their tax advisors before claiming any tax-deductible charitable contributions.
ABOUT THE KIRC

The Kaho’olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) was established by the Hawai’i State Legislature in 1994 to manage the Kaho’olawe Island Reserve while held in trust for a future Native Hawaiian sovereign entity. The KIRC has pledged to provide for the meaningful and safe use of Kaho’olawe for the purpose of the traditional and cultural practices of the native Hawaiian people and to undertake the restoration of the island and its waters. Its mission is to implement the vision for Kaho’olawe Island in which the kino (body) of Kaho’olawe is restored and nā po’e o Hawai‘i (the people of Hawai‘i) care for the land. The organization is managed by a seven-member Commission and a committed staff specializing in five core programs: Ocean, Restoration, Culture, Operations and Administration.

COMMISSIONERS

Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana: Joshua Kaakua (UH, College of Engineering)

Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana: Jonathan Ching (Land and Property Manager, Office of Hawaiian Affairs)

Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana: Michelle Miki’ala Pescaia (Interpretive Park Ranger, Kalaupapa National Historic Park)

County of Maui: Saumalu Mataafa (Executive Assistant, Department of Management, County of Maui)

Department of Land & Natural Resources: Suzanne Case (Chairperson, Department of Land & Natural Resources)

Native Hawaiian Organization: Hōkūlani Holt (Director, Ka Hikina O Ka Lā & Coordinator, Hawai‘i Papa O Ke Ao, UHMC)

Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA): Carmen Hulu Lindsey (Trustee, OHA)

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