



*KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA*  
**KAHO'OLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION**  
**KŌMIKINA MĀLAMA KAHO'OLAWE**

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**DRAFT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, February 26, 2024**

1:00 pm

In person at 1151 Punchbowl St, Room 132  
Honolulu, HI

Meeting recording located at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0P9tgbQIYuc>

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Saumalu Mataafa, Acting Chairperson (attended remotely); Dawn Chang; 'Ānela Evans (joined remotely at 2:25 pm); Michelle Pescaia (attended remotely); Faith Kahale Saito (attended remotely); Justin Keoni Souza

**EXCUSED:** Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D

**KIRC STAFF:** Michael Nāho'opi'i, Executive Director (ED); Daniel Morris, Deputy Attorney General (DAG); Terri Gavagan, Commission Coordinator (CC) (attended remotely); Ashley Razo, Public Information Specialist (PIS); Dean Tokishi, Ocean Resources Program Manager (ORPM)(attended remotely); Paul Higashino, Restoration Program Manager (RPM) (attended remotely)

**IN PERSON**

**GUESTS:** Keoni Fairbanks; Katie Kamelamela (PKO) (attended remotely)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:20 pm. Roll call was conducted and quorum was established with five Commissioners.

**II. INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS**

Acting Chair Mataafa requested the two new commissioners introduce themselves.

Commissioner Saito introduced herself and stated that she has been a member of the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana (PKO) since 2002 and worked as the Cultural Resources Project Coordinator for the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) from 2009-2012. She was currently the Native Hawaiian Counselor at Honolulu Community College.

Commissioner Souza introduced himself and stated he was currently serving as a Trustee At Large for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). He had been to Kaho'olawe on restoration accesses. He was looking forward to helping the KIRC uphold its mission.

### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

#### A. Minutes of June 26, 2023 Regular Commission Meeting

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chang moved to approve the minutes of June 26, 2023. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye

### IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Acting Chair Mataafa noted that written testimony was submitted by Mr. Marty Martins (see Attachment 1) ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that Mr. Martins’ concerns were being reviewed by the KIRC staff. No other public comments were made at that time.

### V. ACTION ITEMS

#### A. Review Legislation Related to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) and Approve KIRC Legislative Positions for 2024 Session

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed proposed KIRC-related legislation which was carried over from 2023. Proposed legislation included a request for additional positions. The focus of the legislature was on funding in response to the Maui wildfires. However, the legislators how have met with staff indicated that the KIRC should return with this request next year. He also reviewed House Bill (HB) 1800, Relating to the State Budget and HB1889, Relating to State Snails which designated Pupu kua mauna (*Pleuropoma laciniosa kahoolawensis*) as official snail of Kaho‘olawe. ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that while this snail was considered extinct, RPM Higashino reported that the snail was seen alive on Kaho‘olawe. This could result in future funding to preserve this species.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that confirmation hearings were scheduled for Acting Chair Mataafa, Commissioner Saito and Commissioner Souza by the Senate Committee on Water and Land (WTL).

ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that given the challenges from the Maui wildfires the KIRC staff would not be looking for legislation to be introduced. However, if legislators ask if the KIRC was requesting anything staff would respond with these two items. The first was to provide funding for four new positions: two Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Specialists (KIR III and II), one Ocean Resources Specialist (ORS II) and one Project Specialist III/IV. The KIR positions would help provide support for boating operations, logistical and field support. The ORS II would support on-island coastal management, restoration and protection. The Project Specialist would support management of grant applications, budgets, expenses and reimbursements.

The second funding request was for \$4,250,000 in general obligation bond funds to complete the final designs and planning for the KIRC Education and Operations Center.

Acting Chair Mataafa opened the floor for discussion. There was no discussion.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Souza moved to approve KIRC legislative positions for the 2024 session. Commissioner Chang seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

**B. Approve Proposed CY2024 (Calendar Year 2024) Access Dates and Activities for the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO)**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i provided background on the current stewardship agreement with the PKO. Volunteers must be conducting a KIRC authorized activity during a KIRC approved access to be provided coverage by the State, at the discretion of the Department of the Attorney General.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the memo included in the meeting packet listed the proposed activities which have remained the same for the last several years as well as the proposed activity dates for the current calendar year. These activities and dates, if approved by the Commission, would be considered authorized and approved activities. Therefore, they would be covered under the stewardship agreement if there was an accident in accordance with the discretion of the Department of the Attorney General’s office. ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that if there are any changes to the dates after approval, there is a stipulation that allows the Executive Director to administratively approve any date changes.

Commissioner Chang noted that this protects a PKO member on an approved access doing an authorized activity and asked if this was for the purposes of liability if they get hurt and asked what the purpose of the liability was. DAG Morris responded that there was a statutory framework for providing representation for volunteers in state service. There was a lack of clarity about the circumstances about when that would arise and there was also recognition that it was not an automatic coverage, it was at the Attorney General’s discretion. He thought that by coming up with these parameters about authorized activities and putting on some constraints on the volunteer activities it would facilitate the Attorney General’s process of determining the appropriateness of providing volunteers with representation under those circumstances. Commissioner Chang thanked DAG Morris for his response.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Saito moved to approve the proposed CY 2024 access dates and activities for the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

**C. Authorize the Executive Director to Award Base Camp Management Operations Contract to Dawson Solution, LLC for FY2025**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained staff created a new solicitation for Base Camp operations because the language in the previous contract was deficient.

The staff wanted to award the new contract to Dawson Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$558,041.61 for May 15, 2024 through May 14, 2025. Dawson Solutions, LLC was the only technically qualified, competent bidder.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reviewed the cost breakdown as detailed in the meeting packet memo. He noted an increase in contingency funds (\$15,000) for transportation because staff had trouble getting boat repairs completed due to noncompliance of vendors. Staff could contract the Base Camp contractor to procure the boat repair services.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that contingency allowances are returned if not used. He explained that staff planned to encumber the first three months using FY2024 funding and the rest of the contract will be encumbered upon the release of FY2025 general funds. Only general funds will be used.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked what if the staff anticipated using general funds for the next contract or will it depend on what the legislature does this session. ED Nāho‘opi‘i replied that staff was going to use a combination of general funds and incorporating approximately 25% of infrastructure costs for base camp and the boat in most grants so that part of the reimbursable funds will go towards these contracts.

Commissioner Saito asked if the contingency funds covering ‘Ōhua repairs was enough and what if more was needed. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the \$15,000 was enough for now. He explained that contracts can be written to cover larger boat repairs, but it was more difficult for staff to pay for smaller repairs because vendors are either not compliant or do not want to accept purchase orders. Staff does use the pCard for those services and parts under \$2500.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked for clarification of the salary increases. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that there was a 4% cost of living increase for the chef; an 8% salary increase for the project manager which also incorporated the corporate GNA overhead increase and compensated for additional hours spent in Hakioawa. Acting Chair Mataafa commented that when the project manager was putting in more hours than the staff the KIRC would start getting into a position where they are going to be pay increases year after year. He suggested that the staff really pay attention to that. Staff could load and unload to provide some cost savings. The project manager should be providing oversight coordination.

Commissioner Chang asked if this was just a contract for services. ED Nāho‘opi‘i confirmed this was a contract for services. Commissioner Chang asked why there was a discussion about the contractor’s position and what they charge. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that it was to explain the cost increase. Commissioner Chang commented the KIRC contracted for a set of services and how the contractor

performs those services was their kuleana. If the KIRC acted more like an employer, then it would assume more of a liability. ED Nāho‘opi‘i added that the contractor did need to coordinate with KIRC staff regarding the use of the contingency funds.

Commissioner Chang asked for clarification of the 25% charged in grant projects, Was that an admin fee? ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded no. He provided an example of a grant for coastal plant restoration. The KIRC included the cost of the boat runs to transport the volunteers to the island and the cost of housing the volunteers as a direct cost to the grant. The 25% is not a set amount, it is more of a target. Staff tries to build in 25% of direct cost elements that would normally not be covered by the grant as a way of supporting the volunteers and the staff. This was how staff justifies including that cost into the grant. Commissioner Chang responded that made sense.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Souza moved to authorize the Executive Director to award a Base Camp Management contract to Dawson Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$558,041.61, for the period May 15, 2024 through May 14, 2025. Commissioner Pescaia seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

**D. Authorize the Executive Director to Extend Communications Systems Contract with Harmer Radio and Electronics, Inc. for FY2025**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that a second of three contract extensions was being requested by staff. He noted that the increased cost of salaries was offset by the savings from switching to digital radios. He also explained that the communications contract provided a microwave link, phone and internet services to Kaho‘olawe.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Pescaia moved to authorize the Executive Director to extend the Communications Contract with Harmer Radio and Electronics, Inc. for the period May 01, 2024, through April 30, 2025, in the amount of \$74,876.77. Commissioner Saito seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Saito asked how open access was to the cameras on Kaho‘olawe. ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that access was limited to certain people, mostly staff for monitoring current ocean and shore conditions, due to bandwidth limitations.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

**E. Approve Recommendation and Direct Staff to Submit Recommendation for New Chairperson to the Governor**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the Commissioners could recommend to the governor a specific Commissioner be appointed KIRC Chair as the governor appoints the KIRC Chair. No confirmation from the senate was required.

Commissioner Pescaia volunteered to be KIRC Chair.

Acting Chair Mataafa commented that he felt she was a good selection.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Souza moved to recommend Commissioner Pescaia to the Governor be appointed as KIRC Chair. Commissioner Saito seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Acting Chair Mataafa stated that Commissioner Pescaia was an excellent leader and has a lot of insight. He fully supported her as KIRC Chair.

Commissioner Saito stated that she agreed with Acting Chair Mataafa and noted that Commissioner Pescaia was an excellent leader for Moloka‘i and the PKO.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i thanked Acting Chair Mataafa for supporting the KIRC and volunteering to be Acting Chair, especially given his position responsibilities on Maui.

**G. Nominate and Vote on Vice Chairperson**

Commissioner Souza nominated Commissioner Saito for Vice Chair. Commissioner Saito accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Souza stated that Commissioner Saito served the community well, and had known her for many years and worked with her on a few occasions. He believed that she would serve in that role to the best of her ability.

Acting Chair Mataafa stated he echoed Commissioner Souza’s comments. It was clear from the limited interaction today that she had the competence, ability and temperament to lead the Commission as Vice Chair.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Pescaia moved to elect Commissioner Saito as KIRC Vice Chair. Commissioner Souza seconded the motion.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously via roll call: Acting Chair Mataafa-aye; Commissioner Chang-aye; Commissioner Pescaia-aye; Commissioner Saito-aye; Commissioner Souza-aye.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked DAG Morris who presides at the next KIRC meeting. DAG Morris deferred to ED Nāho‘opi‘i because he did not have the answer. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that because the Commission votes on the Vice Chair and it was not in the statute, the Vice Chair becomes the Acting Chair in lieu of a Chair so the Vice Chair would preside at KIRC meetings until the Governor names a KIRC Chair. DAG Morris agreed with this reasoning.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked if he should continue running the meeting or if Vice Chair Saito should take over. DAG Morris responded it would be most appropriate for Acting Chair Mataafa to continue to preside over this commission meeting as stated in the KIRC’s public notice.

## **VI. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

### **A. Executive Director’s Report**

#### **1. Status Update on Budget, Finance and Funding: Review of Annual Trust Fund Report to Legislature, Review Expenditure Report and Budget Variances**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the Kaho‘olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund was at roughly the same balance at the end of FY2023 as the previous year. None of the trust fund was being used to encumber large contracts. None of the trust fund was being used to encumber large contracts which had to be done in the past.

Trust fund money was initially utilized for grant projects and then staff applied for reimbursements which would be placed in the trust fund. There can be a delay of three months to almost a year in receiving the reimbursements. Staff was trying to shorten the accounts payable time period to three months if possible.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i referred to the expense report included in the Commission packet and reported that the KIRC was significantly underspending. This was due to a delay in the start of the DOH (Department of Health) 6 grant which was included in the budget because the DOH was waiting to see what would happen with their federal funds. Staff was delaying making large purchases and hiring staff for this grant until a contract was signed.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that the staff anticipated that the KIRC would be 3%-6% underbudget by the end of this fiscal year.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked if ED Nāho‘opi‘i anticipated any budget changes for the next fiscal year, especially if reductions were necessary. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the Base Camp operations were the largest expense. The only way to decrease the cost was to decrease the number of days that the Base Camp was open. Currently, there is a proposal to reduce general funds and operating funds by 10% and 15%. If a 10% decrease is requested from DLNR, the KIRC’s contribution would be approximately \$20,000 in operating costs. If a 15% decrease is requested, the KIRC’s contribution would be approximately \$120,000 in current operating expenses.

#### **2. Status Update on Plans, Policies and Procedures: Review Long Range Schedule**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i referred the Commission to the long-range schedule included in the Commission packet. He explained that there were a lot of cancellations due to the problems with the ‘Ōhua. Not many new groups were being included into the

schedule. There was a window in June for FestPac. There was also a tentative site visit by the House Water and Land Committee scheduled in July.

Commissioner Saito requested that the name of Kaholokalani be changed to Ipu a Kane and asked if the Hakioawa line was supposed to be aligned with Piko Wakea. ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated that the PKO requested access to Honokanai‘a for those dates. Commissioner Saito asked if the PKO was also going to be at Hakioawa. ED Nāho‘opi‘i said yes.

Acting Chair Mataafa suggested that the Commission start looking past 2026 and evaluating where the KIRC was in reaching its goals. He suggested the Commission look at I Ola Kanaloa’s goals and see where the KIRC was at in terms of percentage and potentially adjusting those goals. He asked if this was something staff could do. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that the I Ola Kanaloa Working Group’s goal to document achievements by the end of this fiscal year. FY2025 would be used to review the goals and determine if the group wanted to change goals and publish a corresponding document in FY2026. The document would go out in CY 2026 for public review. Acting Chair Mataafa stated it would be good for the Commission to review some of the goals with staff and see how it can help moving forward. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded he would start including I Ola Kanaloa Working Group updates in the administrative update.

Commissioner Chang asked staff to make a copy of I Ola Kanaloa available for those who were not part of the process. ED Nāho‘opi‘i agreed to provide a copy.

**3. Status Update on Administration, Staffing and Personnel: Report on Status of Current Commissioner's Appointments; Report on Commissioner's Term expiring at end of FY2024; Report on New KIRC Staff hires and recruitments**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the terms of Commissioner Evans and Pang will end on June 30, 2024 and both are eligible to serve another term.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i introduced Ashley Razo as the new KIRC Public Information Specialist, replacing Maggie Pulver. He also reported that Lopaka White was promoted to Reserve Operations Manager (RAM) and Grant Thompson was promoted to Maintenance and Vessel Operator (MAVO), a position previously held by Lopaka White.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that two applicants applied for the Cultural Resource Project Coordinator (CRPC) position. The hiring committee, including Commissioner Pescaia, selected one person. Staff was currently working on the actual offer to that person.

Staff began recruiting for the newly vacated logistic specialist position which was previously held by Grant Thompson.

Acting Chair Mataafa welcomed PIS Razo and congratulated RAM White and MAVO Thompson.



#### **4. Status Update on Public Information, Outreach and Government Relations: Report on Legislative Interactions - Senate Ways and Means Committee July 27, 2023 Briefing and Canceled House Water and Land Committee September 2023 site visit to Kaho‘olawe**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported that staff gave a presentation about the Kīhei Education and Operations Center to the Senate Ways and Means (WAM) Committee at Kūlanihāko‘i High School Library on July 27, 2023. It was well received. The committee had also asked for a presentation on the plan for the transfer of Kaho‘olawe to a native Hawaiian sovereign governing entity. The staff provided a presentation of the Sovereign Transfer Action Plan which was created as part of the 2008 Strategic Plan. A federal register announcement of a sovereign governing entity which would be followed by a bill, governor’s proclamation or executive order recognizing that entity would trigger this action plan. There are four possible means of transferring the island:

- 1) Seats on the KIRC would be transferred to a native Hawaiian sovereign entity because the Commission has management and control of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve (KIR) according to existing statutes
- 2) The KIRC stays with the State if the entity decides taking over KIR was too much of a liability and declined to accept it at that time
- 3) Title of KIR is transferred
- 4) Title and the residual balance of the trust fund is transferred

Commissioner Saito asked if the action plan was a public document. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that it was a public document and was part of the strategic action plans which are on the KIRC website.

Commissioner Saito asked would the sovereign governing entity directly approach the KIRC. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded no; probably a bill would be introduced into Congress that would recognize an organization as a native Hawaiian sovereign entity which would most likely be attached to a funding bill and on the state side a bill would also be introduced also recognizing the entity.

Commissioner Chang stated right now the federal government does not have any jurisdiction regarding Kaho‘olawe except for on-going liability for any unexploded ordnance. It would be the State of Hawai‘i and the federally recognized entity that would negotiate the terms of the transfer. When the federal government recognized a sovereign entity it would trigger the next step of negotiation, assuming that the State of Hawai‘i also recognized the entity. ED Nāho‘opi‘i noted that according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State and the US Navy all terms in the MOU and adopted after 1993 would have to be adopted by whoever takes the title. Commissioner Chang responded that she thought it was for liability purposes, for the federal government to continue to have liability the entity would have to agree to those terms of the MOU.

Commissioner Saito asked why there were two pathways—title and management and control. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded the actual language in HRS 6-K states “transfer, management and control”; it does not state transfer the title. It was clarified that the title pathway was included in the action plan to be prepared for any eventuality.

The site visit planned by the House Water and Land Committee to Kaho‘olawe was cancelled due to fires on Maui. It was tentatively rescheduled for this summer.

Commissioner Saito asked if Commissioners were allowed that site visit. ED Nāho‘opi‘i stated yes. Commissioner Chang noted that not more than two Commissioners could participate because of the Sunshine Law. Commissioner Saito asked staff to keep the Commissioners informed of the date in case one of them wanted to participate.

**5. Status Update on Capital Improvements, Reserve operations and Logistics: Update on, KIRC vessel, ‘Ōhua, Repairs and Update on Base Camp Capital Improvement Project (CIP)**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that staff still had not find out the source of vibration on the ‘Ōhua but did find there was a leak in the turbo chargers. Staff was trying to replace the turbo chargers. There have been problems purchasing the turbo chargers as explained earlier in the meeting.

ED Nāho‘opi‘i explained that the Base Camp CIP project would include roof repairs, replacing all freshwater distribution piping and making building improvements such as redoing board walks.

**VI. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES**

**A. Status Update on Current Commission/Administration Projects**

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

CC Gavagan reported that the deliverables for this grant project were completed and the full grant amount was received from IMLS. This was the last report on the project. She reported that staff was in the process of upgrading the Kaho‘olawe Living Library website by converting it from one hosted by PastPerfect to one hosted by CataLogIt which was more user friendly.

Commissioner Chang asked if the Kaho‘olawe Living Library would require ongoing maintenance and would it be updated with new information. CC Gavagan responded that she continued to work on adding records as time allowed and that staff would apply for grants for future funding as needed.

**2. KIRC Live-Stream and VR Expedition Project (IMLS4)**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported this project included live video streams from Kaho‘olawe on the KIRC website and social media posts as well as the KIRC YouTube channel. It also helped to fund improved communications between Maui and Kaho‘olawe as well as networking and computer systems within the office.

**3. Going Mobile: Upgrading the Technological Infrastructure of Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission (IMLS5)**

ED Nāho‘opi‘i reported it is an extension of the IMLS4 grant project; it provided virtual Kaho‘olawe trips on the KIRC website. It also funded the installation of new hardware and software, including new computer servers. Staff was

converting to laptops to create a different way of working which would allow them to work in groups or hubs as well as take them to Kaho‘olawe if needed.

#### **4. Sharing the Stories of Kaho‘olawe’s Past, Present and Future (HTA)**

PIS Razo reported that the exhibit at the Maui Ocean Center (MOC) was being upgraded and updated. The goal was to increase engagement and push for donations. Currently staff was looking at multiple quotes for projectors and for a production company to come in and totally upgrade this exhibit. Part of the upgrade included fixing the topographic map, part of which has already been completed by the MOC electricians. A voiceover by ED Nāho‘opi‘i was completed which will educate the public about the Kīhei Education and Operations Center. It will have a QR code to go to an online donation platform.

Acting Chair Mataafa asked if the QR codes which were supposed to be installed within the exhibit resulted in more traffic and donations. PIS Razo explained they had not been installed yet as it was decided that the QR codes would be posted once the updates were completed. Staff will follow up.

### **B. Status Update on Current Restoration Projects**

#### **1. Coastal and Upland Wetland Restoration on Kaho‘olawe, HI (NAWCA-Wetlands)**

RPM Higashino reported work was still proceeding. Staff and volunteers are removing kiawe along the coastal area in the Keanakeiki wetlands. The cut brush was being utilized for erosion control and stabilizing the sand dune. Staff and volunteers were continuing to weed-eat the alien grasses and cover the area in weed cloth to inhibit the grass growth in the Kealialalo wetlands. Staff may be planting in May or delaying until October or November. There was a better chance of plant survival during the wet season. Staff was delaying purchases until transportation to island was more reliable.

#### **2. Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa Partnership Project (Kanaloa Plant Working Group)**

RPM Higashino reported there are three Kanaloa plants at the Maui Nui Botanical Garden (MNBG). One plant died about a month ago. There are three plants at Kahanu Gardens (under the National Tropical Botanical Gardens) in Hana. Ho‘olawe Farms has a couple of the plants. The Rare Plant Facility at Olinda has 19 plants. There were problems with insects and viruses on the plants. Anna Palomino who runs the Olinda plant facility was working on these challenges. All the other plants appeared to be doing well. The working group meets every three months. The next meeting was scheduled for May. Staff was looking for more partners to put plants in different conditions and areas on Maui. The next meeting will focus on outplanting plans; what steps need to be considered before outplanting can begin on Kaho‘olawe or back into the wild.

#### **3. Kamōhio Watershed Restoration Project 2023-2026 Phase I, Department of Health (DOH 6)**

RPM Higashino reiterated ED Nāho‘opi‘i’s comments regarding this grant project. A lot of DOH personnel have been pulled away to address recovery in Lahaina.

Commissioner Chang asked if there were other funds available that might help do the work such as the Department of Defense (DoD). ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that was a touchy source. Commissioner Chang stated she understood that but that they should be paying for some of the restoration. She also suggested the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded that there was a potential HCF (Hawai‘i Community Fund) grant staff was looking at. Commissioner Chang added that the DOD’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) was a great partner with DLNR on watershed protection. ED Nāho‘opi‘i responded one challenge was that most funding agencies recognize only one Hawai‘i agency. PIS Razo added that staff was applying for the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) climate resiliency grants. Commissioner Chang asked if staff was partnering with Climate Commission.

Commission Saito commented she was interested in the snails and would speak to RPM Higashino at another time about them.

**C. Status Update on Current Ocean Program Grant Projects:**

**1. Coastal Wetland Restoration of Kahoolawe, HI, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (CWC)**

ORPM Tokishi reported all the deliverables were fulfilled except the last:

- a) Hiring a position
- b) Planting the minimum of 20,000 plants
- c) Silt excavation on the road
- d) Deploying long-term sediment monitors in the ocean
- e) Partnering with the University of Hawai‘i (UH) Geography Department

Staff would continue to work with UH to do more wetland research. Staff spent a little more than \$161,000 and billed \$140,000 and were awaiting reimbursements.

**2. Developing a Digital Application for the Collection of Kilo ‘Ike Pili (IMLS 6)**

ORPM Tokishi reported this grant was just under \$100,000 and was scheduled to run from July 2023 to June 2026. The focus of this grant was to partner with the PKO doing monitoring of resources on and around Kaho‘olawe. The KIRC Ocean Program would be utilizing helicopter aerial surveys and creating a database would be shared with the PKO so that their sightings and monitoring efforts could be compiled as well. No money was spent yet. The helicopter contract was just secured. Helicopter surveys are scheduled to start in April.

Commissioner Saito asked if PKO representatives would be able to participate in the helicopter surveys. She hoped to develop a working relationship between the PKO and the KIRC while serving on the Commission. She was always going to encourage that the PKO and KIRC partner so that the PKO has opportunities to see firsthand some of the things that the KIRC staff was seeing. ORPM Tokishi stated that the opportunities would always be there; the invitation would always be extended. There would be logistical challenges. One was that the contracted helicopter company had

helicopters that seat three people. Another was scheduling; these surveys are scheduled just a couple of months in advance. Staff would let PKO know if there was space available and it would need to be filled by someone either on Maui or who could come to Maui.

Commissioner Saito asked if PKO would be able to see the amended project since it was changed from its original form. ORMP Tokishi responded that he does not have that. It would be the PKO representative, Maggie Pulver, that would have it. He also stated that this project was submitted by Ms. Pulver prior to her departure from the KIRC. It was modified upon her departure.

### **3. Marine Debris Removal from Kanapou on Kaho‘olawe, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Marine Debris Grant**

ORMP Tokishi reported that this was the closing out report for this grant project. This was for marine debris removal from Kanapou. The grant amount was for \$76,000 which was received in its entirety. The grant required five tons of debris be removed. Staff and volunteers removed 6.8 tons. This project was unique because none of the debris was put into the Maui County landfill. The debris was either kept on Kaho‘olawe for sedimentation reduction or flown to Maui to be recycled as building blocks by Malama Maui Nui.

Commissioner Saito requested that ‘Oawawahie and Hakioawa be included, at least for budgeting the removal in the future. The PKO was always doing marine debris removal at each of their accesses and the biggest issue was debris removal. She stated she did not know how it worked with grants but it was requested from a PKO member. ORMP Tokishi responded that this particular grant was written specifically for Kanapou. Staff was fortunate that there were helicopter flights that were going around and past the areas of ‘Oawawahie and Hakioawa, so coordination was done with PKO members to coordinate some efforts. KIRC staff did communicate with PKO representatives to let them know when helicopters were flying past and near Hakioawa and ‘Oawawahie.

## **VIII. NEXT MEETING AND FOLLOW UPS**

The Commission decided to start evaluating future long-range plans. Vice Chair Saito will conduct the next meeting. ED Nāho‘opi‘i can include I Ola Kanaloa update to his administrative updates. Staff was also to check on the status of the QR codes at the MOC exhibit.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

**[EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for the KIRC Commissioners Meeting**

Marty Martins &lt;mauimanokane@yahoo.com&gt;

Fri 2/16/2024 7:01 AM

To:KIRC.PublicTestimony &lt;kirc.publictestimony@hawaii.gov&gt;

**ATTACHMENT 1**

Aloha e KIRC Commissioners:

Recently, I was using the back inside cover of the current newsletter to explain the benefits of supporting KIRC membership. For the first time, I noticed one of those benefits is “VIP Access to Maui Ocean Center.” That’s a pretty sweet benefit, but how does a member prove that when they show up at the admissions counter?

Every other donation-supported charity to which I belong acknowledges the membership with a “thank you” letter, which can also be used as proof of a charitable donation to the IRS, and a personalized membership card. There might be classier ones like ‘Iolani Palace with the name and expiration date printed on the laminated card, or more low-budget cards like Maui Nui Botanical Garden with the name and expiration date handwritten.

Another advertised benefit in each of the membership categories is “Subscription to Ko Hema Lamalama.” It might be more honest to say “A copy of the annual Ko Hema Lamalama,” as there hasn’t been more than one issue per year for the last two or three years.

Also, I’ve always been curious why 1) there is not an effort to get members to renew, and 2) why the tax-free Foundation doesn’t ask for money prior to annual Giving Tuesday (the Tuesday after Black Friday) like all other charitable organizations? Standing in-line for scraps from the Legislature every year seems like poor odds?

Every other membership organization to which I belong sends me an annual renewal notice [compare the total number of names of members in all categories (almost half a page a few years ago) to the meager list in the Summer 2023 issue. Why is that?]

and, separately, a donation request. People would rather give money to something in which they are interested or are concerned about before giving it to the government. Why don’t we do that?

Respectfully,

Marty Martins  
Benefactor Member  
Kīhei, Maui