



KAHO'OLAWE EXHIBIT AT THE MAUI OCEAN CENTER

(2019-Present)

BACKGROUND

In 2018 the Kahō'olawe Island Reserve Commission was approached by the Maui Ocean Center (MOC) to collaborate on an exhibit about Kahō'olawe to be housed at the MOC. The KIRC loaned items which were originally incorporated in two exhibits—the Ke Aloha Kupa'a I ka 'Āina exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum and the Kahō'olawe: Rebirth of a Sacred Hawaiian Island exhibit at the Bishop Museum. Additionally, the KIRC has loaned artifacts for this exhibit which are part of the Navy Collection, acquired from Hale Ho'ike'ike at the Bailey House/Maui Historical Society in 2015. These objects have never been seen by the public until now. Originally the exhibit was to be displayed for one year but continues to be one of the more popular exhibits at the Maui Ocean Center.

UPDATE:

The exhibit is a popular installation at the MOC. There is regular traffic through the hall and in 2019 the MOC director requested a regular KIRC presence in the space to engage with visitors and answer their questions. He also suggested that the KIRC team install a locked donation box or a poster with a QR code that could provide an avenue for collecting donations. Two of the restoration team members served as docents in the space prior to the COVID 19 pandemic and the KIRC Public Information Specialist recruited a community volunteer to serve as a docent on Fridays. When the MOC closed for the pandemic, the docent program was suspended. When the center reopened, the docent program was still on hold until the MOC invited their regular vendors back on to the property in 2022. The KIRC's regular community volunteer docent resumed a weekly presence in the exhibit in early 2022. In late 2022, the two KIRC restoration staff members expressed an interest in returning to the exhibit and the new Ocean program hires also expressed an interest in serving as docents once a week. They have not yet started.

The photographs and signage in the exhibit hall has held up nicely and still seem to be a major draw for visitors. Shortly after the MOC reopened, the KIRC community volunteer docent both notified the KIRC



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Public Information Specialist that several of the artifacts in the display case had shifted or fallen off their shelves and several of their labels had fallen down. Maggie notified the KIRC Commission Coordinator who is responsible for the artifacts and KIRC archive and she promptly went to the MOC and re-placed the pieces and secured them more effectively in the case.

The KIRC volunteer docent provides weekly updates regarding the visitor traffic in and state of the exhibit. In January 2023, he informed the PIS that the interactive light-up topographic map from the original Smithsonian and Bishop Museum exhibits was beginning to fall into disrepair. At that time, two of the wahi pani light bulbs and one of the images were no longer lighting up. Since then, it has only gotten worse and to date, only one or two of the 10 lights marking the wahi pana on the map are still working, and all ten of the light-up images are no longer illuminating when the button is pushed. The PIS reached out to the MOC education director and executive director to request support with troubleshooting the electrical problem. The Education Director shared that their in-house electrician had taken a look and would attempt to make a repair, but this hasn't happened yet. The KIRC PIS consulted with the Commission Coordinator and both are not really sure about next steps regarding repairs to the map if the MOC electrician is unable to fix it.

The KIRC PIS submitted a proposal to the Hawaii Tourism Authority's Kukulū Ola grant program requesting \$40,000 in funding to upgrade the exhibit. The goal would be to change out some of the existing photos and signage to reflect more recent and current restoration and conservation projects happening on Kaho'olawe, and to install additional digital resources on the existing installations.