

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Aloha and best wishes for a Joyous, Healthy and Productive holiday season and new year to all our members and friends. This, our annual report, is designed to bring you up to date on our activities, projects and programs during the past year - of which we are justifiably proud.

The photo on our cover page shows the native plant akia growing with laua'e fern in one of the garden beds at Kamehameha School. I hope that seeing an attractive pairing like this will inspire you to increase the amount of native plants in your own garden.

As you know, our motto is 'Preserving Hawai'i's Precious Natural Heritage', and one of the ways we do this is by trying to inspire everyone to value our native species - plant them, and protect them. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, our exempt purpose is to assure critical habitat for native species and open space for future generations, through environmental education, hands-on projects, and acquisition of land for preservation, protection and restoration. As you read this report, please bear that in mind so that you can evaluate our success in maintaining this commitment.

And rest assured, we welcome your suggestions for projects that will increase our success. We also welcome and encourage your participation in such projects, so please keep in touch with us so that we can inform you about upcoming events, opportunities to testify on issues, and other matters of interest. If you have changed your email address within the last few years, please let us know - failure to do so has made it hard for us to keep you informed - and emails save paper (trees) and money. Mahalo and malama pono,

René

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

René Siracusa,
President.

Ann Kobsa,
Vice-President, Invasive Species Coordinator.

Sherry Kelso-Palmer,
Secretary-Treasurer, Land Trust Chair, Webmaster.

M. Malia Messick,
Education Chair, Kahu Wai Coordinator.

Rex Palmer,
Botanical Consultant.

Mark Franklin,
Arboretum Manager, Youth Programs Director.

Jen Rasmussen,
Membership Chair.

Nohealani Casperson,
Outreach Director.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Kahu Wai Program

Our Education Chair, Malia, designed this program and got us \$77,525 from NOAA to conduct field trips and classes for five E. Hawaii schools to study watersheds from an ahupua'a perspective. She created a beautifully illustrated curriculum for the program. The curriculum was donated to the participating schools. The students did some amazing science projects and displayed them at two term-end parties at the Pahoia Museum & the Wailoa Center. We would like to take this program to more schools and students, and will be seeking funding to expand the program.

KAHU WAI Mālama O Puna
Keiki Advancing Hawai'i's Understanding of Watershed/Ahupua'a Issues

Come Celebrate With Us!
All are invited to join us as we share some of the things we've been doing over the last year and what we've learned about our island's watersheds

Friday, June 3rd 4:30-5:30PM
Reception at the Wailoa Center Fountain Gallery
Work can be seen June 3rd - June 22nd

And

Friday, June 24th 7:00-9:00PM
Reception at The Pahoia Village Museum
Work can be seen June 24th - July 22nd

The KAHU WAI Project is part of Mālama O Puna's environmental education program, which has been funded by a grant from NOAA. The project's goals are to foster environmental literacy among future decision makers through place-based education, and to raise awareness in our communities about the health and wise management of our local watersheds. Using the ahupua'a, a traditional Hawaiian land division, as a touchstone, we invite students to explore watershed systems while incorporating traditional knowledge, resource management practices and views about our relationship to the natural world.

This academic year students in grades 2-4 and 11-12 from Puna and Hilo schools participated in the project. Come see some of their excellent work!

MOP website

Sherry Kelso-Palmer is a graphic designer who we are fortunate to have on our board, where she also serves as our webmaster. Our website, www.malamaopuna.org, is her creation, and supplies some interesting links for those doing research on

environmental topics and recipes for locally grown foods. Check it out.

Caring for our Land

To date, we have submitted 85 columns to The Puna News, which ceased paper publication this year and became an on-line monthly newspaper. We use this venue to keep the readers up-to-date on events, topics and proposed environmental legislation, as well as providing handy tips and resource info for greener living.

Puna Sustainability Expo

In 2008 we partnered with Aha Kanaka (the Kanaka Council) to host the first expo (in Nov.). In 2009 and 2010 we put on two per year (May and Nov.) but without the Aha Kanaka, who were busy on other projects. In 2011 we decided that once a year is enough, and changed the date to 2nd Saturday in October in Leilani. This will be a regular date and location from now on. Our participating exhibitors are increasing and finding ways to make their exhibits more dynamic and interactive. Keep the date of October 13, 2012 for the 7th annual Puna Sustainability Expo. See you there!



After Dark in the Park: anchialine ponds/'opae 'ula and ōpeapea

In order to keep up to date with scientific studies, so that we are accurate in our

assessments and in the knowledge we share with you, we do a lot of reading and attending of seminars, workshops and lectures such as a program at HVNP about 'opae 'ula and anchialine ponds, and another one on the ōpeapea (the Hawaiian hoary bat), and conferences.

Outreach Events: 1st annual Aha Hui O Pohoiki, Grow Hawaii Fest (Kona) Island Naturals Pahoia Parking Lot Party, UH-H Sustainability Festival, Kalani Honua Eco-Fest.

We are always looking for opportunities to get our messages out to the public, and set up our educational exhibits to complement the focus of the event. The above are some of the events we took part in in 2011.

Kapoho Wastewater Issues

We attended a presentation on the Kapoho Wastewater Feasibility Study, where we learned that if homes on cesspools reduce their water use, they will also reduce the amount of effluent leaching into the ocean. So we developed a small handout containing tips on how homeowners can take simple voluntary steps to reduce their pollution impact. It is available at the District 5 Council Office. Of course, this is not the ultimate solution, but since that will be many years in the future, it is an important interim step.

HANDS-ON PROJECTS

Miconia Eradication in Malama Ki & Nanawale Forest Reserve.

Under the leadership of our Invasive Species Coordinator, Dr. Ann Kobsa, we have been doing our part to restore the forest reserves to a pristine state. During at least 7 workdays, covering over 50 acres, the team killed over 1,400 miconia plants. Ann found some 'Ohe (Tetraplasandra) that were being

damaged by pigs, and built protective fences around the trees. Seedlings are now emerging as a result. We can help you adopt forest reserve near you.

Red Mangrove Eradication



The photo shows the cleaner water and native 'akulikuli thriving beside dead mangroves at Wai 'Opae. We have virtually eradicated the mangroves here, and also at Poho'iki, Paki Bay and Onekahakaha, where they were ruining the shoreline. The native coastal species were being crowded out by the invasive alien trees that also reduced water quality. Although the dead mangroves are unsightly at present, this is just temporary. They are giving way to the native coastal species that are now able to enjoy the sun. We have also been outplanting to speed the reforestation process along. In 2012, with funding from US Fish & Wildlife Service, we will work on the Kona side, where .7 acre of mangroves are encroaching on the heiau and degrading the anchialine pools. We will also be eliminating the invasive pickleweed there - no herbicides - all manual work. At the same time we will continue to monitor the East Hawaii sites to prevent reinfestation. This is the job that 'they'

said couldn't be done. We did it anyway. So there!

Uluwehi Native Tree Arboretum

In 2000 we were donated a 9-acre parcel in Nanawale where we want to create a native tree arboretum. We have not been able to secure funding for developing the site, but periodically we schedule a workday there, eradicate albizias, weed and do some planting. We encourage you to volunteer to join us at our next workday. To be notified, email us at malamaopuna@yahoo.com and we will let you know when we are going out again. And mahalo.

Weed Control in Wao Kele O Puna

At the beginning of the year we ran out of time on our grant from OHA to do weed control in the Wao Kele O Puna forest. A late start on the project, due to a fruitless (until the last minute) search for an insurer, and a very rainy year that resulted in many cancelled workdays, meant that we couldn't do as much as we wanted. And OHA would



Mark Franklin with Hame.

not grant us a time extension. However, because we prioritized our work, we were able to clear around an 'Ohe (Tetraplasandra), 3 groves of Papala kēpau, a ¼ acre grove of young Mamake, and other special trees. It is

now up to OHA to manage the forest for the benefit of the native Hawaiians.

Native Plants to Panaewa Zoo

In response to a request from Leonard Bisel, the landscape architect in charge of a new rainforest section, we have donated 3 large Ekaha (Bird's Nest Fern) and some Mamake. Mark Franklin, who operates Holei Nursery, also donated some native plants.

Apa'a St. Litter Pickup



We partnered with Ka'ohe Homesteads Community & Farm Watch to clean up Apa'a St. (a.k.a rubbish dump road) of litter and large appliances, and filled a 30-ft. Matson container. The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney provided funds for the project, and Matson provided the container and a \$1,000 donation from its Ka 'Ipu 'Aina Program which we split with Ka'ohe. HPD provided an officer to direct traffic and keep us all safe - and take the above photo. The photo shows some of the volunteers just before we headed out to the Hilo landfill.

ADVOCACY & WATCHDOGGING

Noxious Weed Rules

The Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture's noxious weed rules need amending, because as soon as a weed becomes

too widespread, they remove it from the list. So Albizia and Strawberry Guava are not on their list! This is counter-productive and sends a VERY misleading message. We have been working hard to urge them to change this, and have even offered wordsmithing to make the transition smooth and understandable. So far no results, but stay tuned. We have been enlisting support from other organizations, agencies and officials and are waiting for the '100th monkey' syndrome to kick in.

GMOs - Research, Labelling, Civil Rights

There is increasing evidence that GMOs in our food supply are responsible for health impacts. Also, that they DO escape cultivation and become naturalized, contaminating non-GMO crops; that they increase pesticide pollution of our soils and water; that they are not tested enough prior to approvals or subjected to the same stringent standards as organic foods; and that they violate many religious tenets. GMO research on Hawaiian taro varieties, for instance, violates the traditional view that kalo is sacred and an ancestor of the Hawaiian people. We testified in support of the Hawaiian view. We have also testified on federal, state and county levels in favor of labelling, because people have a right to decide what they want to put in their bodies - whether or not Monsanto agrees with their decision. The movement is growing, and we are proud to be a part of it.

Letter to USDA re Monsanto's 'drought-resistant' corn.

We submitted testimony to the head of USDA, Secretary Vilsack, urging him NOT to deregulate MON 87460, Monsanto's so-called 'drought-resistant' corn. Based on what Monsanto themselves told USDA, this GMO corn does not perform any better than non-GMO varieties. It is therefore baseless

to deregulate and risk contamination of organic and non-GMO corn for an experiment that didn't work and has no foreseeable benefits. De-regulation would allow it to spread, contaminate, and destroy the rich genetic diversity that the farmers of the world have developed over the thousands of years since the dawn of agriculture.

Monk Seal Support

Save Our Seal (SOS) is a consortium of cultural and environmental organizations that have mobilized to advocate on behalf of the protection and recovery of our endemic monk seals. Malama O Puna is proud to join Greenpeace Hawaii, Conservation Council for Hawaii, KAHEA, Sierra Club, the Humane Society, Earthtrust, Audubon Society, Life of the Land and other prestigious groups in this effort.



Maintaining 2% Lands

We testified at the County Council, asking them to authorize a Charter Amendment for the next election, that would bring the Open Space land fund back up to 2%. Some of the councilmen wanted maintenance for these lands to come out of the fund, and were not supporting the amendment process. We asked some of them, privately, to consider sponsoring a complementary Charter Amendment that would allocate an additional ½% to an Open Space Maintenance Fund, to allay the concerns of the opposing councilmen. Both have now passed.

Saving the 'Iwi & 756 Other Species

The Center for Biological Diversity signed an agreement with the US Fish & Wildlife Service that requires “the agency to make initial or final decisions on whether to add 757 imperiled plant and animal species to The Endangered Species List (ESL) by 2018”. We submitted testimony in support.

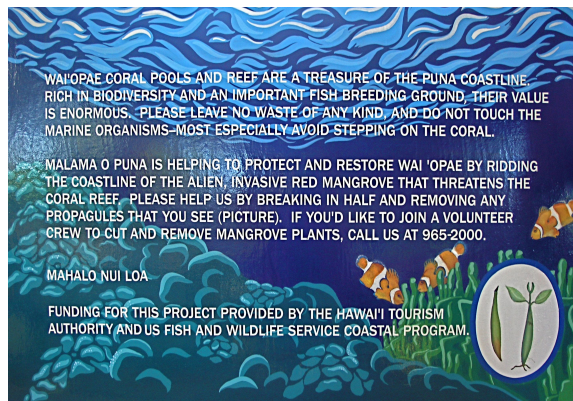
OTHER GOOD STUFF

Candidate Forums

In 2006 we hosted a candidate forum for D. 5 (Puna) County Council candidates. It went over so well that we were asked to broaden the scope, and in 2008 expanded it to State Legislature candidates as well. Now that Puna will have two council seats, we will have to do more expansion, and are putting out the call for volunteers to help organize 3 forums in 2012. Call René at 965-2000 to help. Mahalo.

Red Mangrove Lawsuit

The lawsuit filed against us, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, DLNR and the County was settled out of court. Prior to settlement, the Court had ruled in our favor on the first two of Plaintiff's four complaints. The settlement agreement, initiated by Plaintiff, contained a condition that we would not use herbicide at the Kona red mangrove site (which we were not planning to do anyway), and would remove our interpretive signage from the Wai 'Opae area. The sign had been paid for by the Vacationland C.A., and was returned to them. They have the option to put it up again, but only on their own property. Both Plaintiff and Defendants agreed not to malign each other.



UNDER OUR UMBRELLA

Community Certified Kitchen

Too much of our prime agricultural land has been converted to residential and commercial uses, and this is not a recipe for sustainability. Without farmland we cannot feed ourselves if we are cut off from outside sources. Yet it is increasingly difficult for farmers to provide for their families, and selling the land for development or speculation is costing all of us in the long term. The idea for a certified community kitchen in Pāhoa, discussed for many years, is a way to help farmers convert crops to value-added products that can be stored longer than produce, and sold year-round for a higher return. Pāhoa Feed & Fertilizer is seeking to provide the venue, and we have been working with them to secure grant funding.

Pāhoa Community Garden

Sarah Miller of Pāhoa Village Museum, conceived the idea of converting the town's vacant lots into gardens, but property owners were hesitant to grant permission, fearing liability issues. Malama O Puna placed the project on our insurance policy, appeasing the landowners and gaining their permission. The results are evident.

Pāhoa Springtime Jamm

As a nonprofit we are often asked to help support events and projects in our community, by serving as fiscal agent so

that funding can go through. We have done this repeatedly for the Springtime Jamm - which is now the Youth Jamm. This all day event showcased youth talent, encouraging endeavors in the performing arts. And even us oldies had fun.

Money Stuff

We close our books on Dec. 31 and approve the next year's budget at our January meeting. To review our financial report and budget, please email us at malamaopuna@yahoo.com and we will email them to you once they are approved.

If you like what you have read please help us with a donation or become a member. Or both. We have no paid staff, so your donations go a long way.

MALAMA O PUNA

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Membership Form

Check a category:

low-income individual
\$10

individual \$25

couple \$50

family \$75

business \$100

patron \$500

lifetime \$1000

I want to make an additional donation in amount of \$_____

Total enclosed \$_____

Name(s)_____

Mailing_____

Address:_____

Phone_____

Email_____

Mahalo !