

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Outdoor science education program for island students***

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—August 13, 2010—Island students and their teachers will have the chance again this year to leave the classroom and study firsthand *ahupua‘a* (watersheds) of Hawai‘i Island.

The Kohala Center is recruiting teachers for its second year of HI-MOES—Hawai‘i Island Meaningful Outdoor Experiences for Students, an innovative hands-on science-based program that focuses on bay and watershed education in *ahupua‘a* of the Kona coast, Kohala Mountain and Hilo Bay.

Students will learn about their *ahupua‘a* through classroom presentations and field trips, and identify and implement a scientific research project to work on throughout the year on topics such as coral reefs, forest flora and fauna, water quality, non-point source pollution, runoff, sedimentation or marine debris. The program will culminate in a year-end conference where selected students and teachers can share their research work and learning.

Friday, September 3, is the registration deadline for teachers wishing to participate. For more information or to apply, contact The Kohala Center ([info@kohalacenter.org](mailto:info@kohalacenter.org) or 887-6411, or visit [www.kohalacenter.org/himoes/about.html](http://www.kohalacenter.org/himoes/about.html)). Teachers who participated in last year’s program are encouraged to apply again. The program focuses on intermediate and high school science teachers in Kona, Kohala, and North and South Hilo.

“HI-MOES is a great opportunity for students to learn science by creating their own research projects, while investigating the different ecosystems around them,” said Samantha Birch, field educator and program leader with The Kohala Center. “We are expanding the program by adding Hilo Bay as one of the study sites, and increasing the number of teachers and students participating in the year-long program.”

Mari Taira, a teacher at Waikoloa Middle School and a participant of HI-MOES 2009-2010, said, “The HI-MOES Program is a unique partnership that allows students to study and experience Hawaiian ecosystems from a scientific perspective. Without this partnership, I feel that many of the students would never see the amazing flora and fauna that once existed on their island. I hope that by providing this experience, students use their new knowledge to respect and protect the living things that surround them and share their experiences with others.”

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Two outdoor educators—Birch and Melora Purell of the Kohala Watershed Partnership—will provide technical, logistical and programmatic support to twelve selected teachers from Hawai‘i Island during the academic year. Scientists and cultural experts working in these areas will also participate in the program through classroom presentations and project support.

This project is in partnership with The Kohala Watershed Partnership and is supported by NOAA B-WET (Bay Watershed Education and Training Program) funding. Mini-grants will be available to participating teachers to purchase project-related supplies, and the program will fund transportation and substitute teacher costs associated with their projects.

The Kohala Center is an independent, not-for-profit, community-based center for research and education *about* and *for* the environment. By respectfully engaging Hawai‘i Island as the world’s most vibrant classroom and laboratory for humanity, The Kohala Center focuses on building programs that promote energy self-reliance, food self-reliance, and ecosystem health. The Kohala Center operates in partnership with local, national, and international research and educational institutions.