

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Outdoor science education program for island students

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—August 19, 2009—Island students and their teachers will have the chance this year to leave the classroom and study firsthand *ahupua‘a* (watersheds) of West Hawai‘i.

The Kohala Center is launching HI-MOES—Hawai‘i Island Meaningful Outdoor Education for Students—an innovative hands-on science-based program that focuses on bay and watershed education in the watersheds of the Kona coast and Kohala Mountain.

“This is a great opportunity to get students and their teachers out of the classroom to learn about watersheds and how we as humans affect the ecosystems within our *ahupua‘a*,” said Samantha Birch, field educator and program leader with The Kohala Center. “Students can create real research projects in which they make observations, collect and analyze data and present their results to their peers at a conference. What better way to learn about science and the environment around us!”

HI-MOES aims to provide students and teachers with outdoor education experiences and support for hands-on research projects in their *ahupua‘a* that will be tied to their classroom activities and curricula. HI-MOES will culminate in a year-end conference where selected students and teachers can share their research work and learning.

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

Students will learn about their *ahupua‘a* through classroom presentations and field trips, and then identify and implement a scientific research project to work on throughout the year, such as measuring water quality components in different parts of the watershed, studying non-point source pollution, run-off, sedimentation and marine debris that finds its way to the ocean. Mini-grants will be made available to participating teachers to purchase project-related supplies, and the program will fund transportation and substitute teacher costs associated with their projects.

The HI-MOES program will focus on intermediate and high school teachers but participation is open to any teacher in West Hawai‘i, regardless of her or his subject area.

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The program registration deadline is September 7. If you would like more information or are interested in applying, please contact sbirch@kohalacenter.org, call 887-6411, or see www.kohalacenter.org/himoes/about.html. This project is in partnership with The Kohala Watershed Partnership and is supported by NOAA B-WET funding.

The Kohala Center is an independent, not-for-profit 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 builds teaching and research programs that enhance island environments, serve island communities, and advance the work of the academy. The Kohala Center operates in partnership with local, national, and international research and educational institutions.

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