

Remembering Hawai'i's future by recognizing its traditions at Kahalu'u and Keauhou

By Matt Hamabata,
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Hanau ka 'Uku-ko'ako'a, hanau kana,
he 'Ako'ako'a, puka

**(Born was the coral polyp, born was the coral,
came forth.)**

Thus recounts Martha Warren Beckwith's translation of the *Kumulipo*, the chant of Hawaiian origins, signifying *na kanaka* (Hawaiian/humankind's) relation to the natural environment and recently shared with marine scientists from around the world who convened at Kahalu'u and Keauhou.

The scientists, members of the Global Environmental Fund—World Bank Worldwide Coral Reef Health Team, came from Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, Zanzibar, Yucatan, Israel, and the Florida Keys. They were thinking through the global reef health crisis and its implications for Hawai'i. They also learned the Hawaiian perspective of science, culture and education—and that the *Kumulipo* is associated with Kahalu'u.

In an upcoming presentation, Dr. Pualani Kanahale of the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation will share with island residents her work on *Papakū Makawalu*, a framework that conveys the Hawaiian worldview, a series of curricula she and a team of researchers developed through interpretive study of the *Kumulipo* and through her engagement with Kahalu'u.

Dr. Kanahale's talk is from 5:30–7 p.m., Friday, April 24, at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Hotel. It is part of a collaboratively sponsored series called "*Puana Ka 'Ike*: Imparting Knowledge."

Indeed, something quite remarkable is unfolding at Kahalu'u Bay. Here, two organizations have found themselves in an unexpected and truly innovative collaboration. One of the organizations is small, the other one large; one not-for-profit, the other for-profit; one an independent center for research and education, the other a developer. The unlikely pairing? The Kohala Center and Kamehameha Investment Corporation.

Despite their differences, both share a love and respect for Hawai'i Island, and both understand that Hawai'i's rich intellectual and spiritual heritage can lead Hawai'i and the world into a future of sustained abundance.

And they share a vision for Kahalu'u: education; the environment; and empowerment. Through education, the community is empowered to care for the environment—Kahalu'u Bay and our island planet.

Designed to empower ourselves with indigenous knowledge and Western science, the *Puana Ka 'Ike* history and culture lecture series and the *La 'Ike* science and culture series strengthen and deepen the understanding of our natural environment. (View webcasts of recent lectures at www.kohalacenter.org/puanakaike/webcasts.)



Photo by Bo Pardau

The Kohala Center began its work at Kahalu'u in 2006 by organizing an effort to stop the trampling damage of the fragile coral reef environment, which is used by over 400,000 people per year.

More than 200 volunteers and three dozen local businesses have mobilized to save Kahalu'u Bay. Island residents are reclaiming the bay, saving it from destruction and planning its future; businesses are feeling empowered to protect an important economic and natural asset; and visitors are learning how to respectfully encounter the coral reef.

An innovative ecosystem health project at Kahalu'u looks at the interaction of marine and terrestrial environments by monitoring the nearshore habitat. Merging Western and Hawaiian perspectives of science, culture, and education, we are bringing the best minds from Hawai'i and around the world together at Kahalu'u—such as the Coral Reef Health Team. This group is now actively considering establishing a Hawai'i node in its worldwide network of centers of excellence. That node could very well be at Kahalu'u.

Kamehameha Investments Corporation (KIC) supports this ecosystem health research because the results of this work will shape its long-term planning efforts. Economic development is linked to ecosystem and societal health for this organization. The Kohala Center and Kamehameha Investment Corporation—unlikely partners acting with unabashed optimism to create a more reflective, informed, and engaged island society, so that we can shape our future in a thoughtful, creative, and generous manner.

For the staff of The Kohala Center, this collaborative work allows us to make real The Kohala Center's deep appreciation of a state of *pono*, in which individuals reach their potential, contributing their very best to one another, to the community, and to the 'āina itself, in exchange for a happy and meaningful life.

Join the thought-provoking fun and excitement at Kahalu'u. Visit www.kohalacenter.org for information on the benefit, Bay Concert, *Puana Ka 'Ike* lectures, other events and projects, and to volunteer to save Kahalu'u. ■