

<p>KA'AHAHUI 'O KA NĀHELEHELE <i>a non-profit affiliate of the Dryland Forest Working Group</i></p>	<p><i>Dedicated to Revitalizing Dryland Native Plant Communities</i></p> <p><i>PO Box 764 Kailua-Kona, HI 96745-0764 (808) 325-1070 pililaau@hawaiiantel.net</i></p> <p><i>501c3 non-profit status</i></p>
	

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dryland forest symposium set for February 24

KAILUA-KONA, Hawai'i—January 30, 2012—The 2012 Nāhelehele Dry Forest Symposium will highlight dryland forest ecology and restoration efforts in Hawai'i. The symposium will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, February 24, at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort. The 2012 conference will emphasize “Connections’ in Hawaiian dry forests—between the past and the present, people and the forest, uplands and lowlands, and between the forest and the animals that inhabit them.

The dryland forests of Hawai'i are fragile habitats that are home to many of the rarest plants in the world. Dryland forests were once considered to be the most diverse forest ecosystem on the Hawaiian Islands but today they are extremely deforested and degraded. Only remnant patches of the habitat remain to remind us of the highly diverse community of plants and animals that once dominated the landscape of West Hawai'i. How Hawai'i's unique dryland forests evolved and the relationships between the forest, people and other forest inhabitants will be the focus of this year's Dryland Forest Symposium.

This year is the sixth annual Nāhelehele Dryland Forest Symposium. It will feature presentations by Hawai'i plant and animal experts from around the state. The program includes talks about the origins of dryland forest species in Hawai'i; linkages between the forest and generations of people; the complex roles of alien animals as pollinators, seed dispersers and seed predators; effects of ungulates on dry forests; and Hawai'i's native birds. There will be other talks about the role of fire in shaping dry forest succession, restoration efforts at Auwahi (Maui), and the Mauna Kea Forest Restoration Project.

An optional field trip on the geology, botany and culture of Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park will precede the symposium from 9:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 23. This field trip will include an overview of the geology of Hualalai and Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park and a hike to the coast to view a variety of lowland indigenous and endemic Hawaiian plants. The hike passes through a native plant restoration project conducted from 2000-2007, a petroglyph field, and over different aged lava fields. Trip leaders Jill Wagner and Mark Solien will explore what this coastal forest looked like thousands of years ago based on pollen samples from a sediment core dating to the time before human habitation. The trip will end with a sack lunch on the beach.

The public is invited to attend the symposium and field trip. Register by downloading the

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Media contact: Kathy Frost, Nāhelehele Symposium chairperson
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Web Site: <http://www.kohalacenter.org/nahele12.html>

registration form at <http://www.kohalacenter.org/pdf/naheleregistration.pdf> and emailing it to Cortney Hoffman at choffman@kohalacenter.org, faxing it to 808-885-6707, or call Cortney at 808-443-2757. For more information, go to <http://www.drylandforest.org/events>.

Symposium registration by February 13 is \$55, which includes lunch. After February 13, the registration fee increases to \$70. Student registration is \$35, increasing to \$45 after February 13. The field trip is \$25 (\$15 for students, ID required), and no late registrations will be accepted.

The Nāhelehele Dryland Forest Symposium is a project of Ka‘ahahui ‘o ka Nāhelehele, a non-profit organization dedicated to dry forest advocacy and partnerships. Sponsors of this symposium include Bishop Museum’s Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden, Hawai‘i Forest Industry Association, HTA Kūkulu Ola: Living Hawaiian Culture Program, and The Kohala Center.

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