

<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

2015 Nahelehele Dryland Forest Symposium set for February 27

KAILUA-KONA, Hawai'i—February 2, 2015—The 2015 Nahelehele Dryland Forest Symposium will highlight dryland forest ecology and restoration efforts in Hawai'i. The symposium will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, February 27, at the Courtyard King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel in Kailua-Kona.

There will be two accompanying half-day field trips (\$35 each with lunch provided) on Thursday, February 26, to the Waikoloa Dry Forest Preserve and Saturday, February 28, to the Kalopi Ranch Dryland Forest Project and the Koai'a Tree Sanctuary. The field trips will also provide participants with opportunities to do on-site service work to “give back to the forest.”

“The dryland forests of Hawai'i are fragile habitats that are home to many of the rarest plants in the world,” said Kathy Frost, symposium chairperson. “Dryland forests were once considered to be the most diverse forest ecosystems in 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.”

“The Dryland Forest Symposium provides a forum for hearing about recent developments in dryland forest conservation and restoration, and an opportunity to interact with others interested in dryland forests,” Frost said.

Under the theme “Making a Difference,” this year's symposium will feature presentations by scientists and conservationists who are working to learn about and preserve Hawaiian dryland forest plants and ecosystems. Charles “Chipper” Wichman, President and CEO of the National Tropical Botanical Garden, and Dr. Sheila Conant, Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, will deliver keynote addresses. Wichman will speak about “The Evolution of Plant Conservation in Hawai'i,” while Conant's presentation will address SPAM (Science, People and Money) and the Art of Conservation. Conant will discuss what citizens can do to promote the success of conservation strategies, what they need to know, and the skills necessary to be effective.

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Other presenters will address the use of drones in plant conservation, native plant seed banks, wildfires, reassembling a native forest for the 21st century, the Waikoloa Dry Forest Preserve, hydrology of restored forests, and restoration efforts on Maui and Hawai‘i Island.

The symposium is open to the public. Registration by February 17 is \$65, which includes lunch; after February 17 registration is \$80. Students with valid school identification may register for \$50 before February 17; \$60 after. For more information and to register, visit <http://nahelehele15.eventbrite.com>. Purchase orders are not accepted. Questions regarding registration may be directed to Cortney Okumura at The Kohala Center at cokumura@kohalacenter.org or (808) 443-2757.

The Nahelehele Dryland Forest Symposium is a project of Ka‘ahahui ‘O Ka Nahelehele (<http://www.drylandforest.org>), a nonprofit organization dedicated to dry forest advocacy and partnerships. Sponsors of this symposium include Mark and Carol Ann Solien, Hawai‘i Forest Institute, Hawai‘i Tourism Authority Kukula Ola: Living Hawaiian Culture Program, Kamehameha Schools-Land Assets Division, State of Hawai‘i Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and The Kohala Center.

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