

For Ahihi Kinau to be protected, enhanced and restored; goals of the reserve to be met, supporting or funding this volunteer program called Action Ahihi would be the best step this commission and DOFAW could take. Momentum has been built with the recent growth of the program. Disbanding of the program was not because of lack of funding but rather due to 'temporarily stoppage' by DOFAW.

NARS Mission Statement:

NARS exists to ensure the highest level of stewardship for Hawai'i's unique natural resources through acquisition, active management, and other strategies. Action Ahihi's documented results, example 'the highest level of stewardship'.

Thank you for all of the hard work, listening to all the people and considering ideas, and then making hard decisions. Ahihi Kinau has been a special place for me for over 10 years; volunteers, partners, schoolchildren, church groups and I have dedicated concerted efforts to enhance, educate, empower and malama this only Marine Reserve in Hawaii. I would like to thank NARS commission, BLNR, DOFAW, DOCARE, DAR and many partners for understanding our genuine care of this area and supporting our shared programs like Action Ahihi.

I would like to clear up some dialogue from the minutes of the last NARS meeting (June 4, 2008) concerning the volunteers and Action Ahihi. This program was "formalized" this past year as Action Ahihi. However, it has been an ongoing volunteer, non-grant community based program for over 5 years. This past year DAR, with the help of DOFAW, recognized the efforts of the volunteers by offering the program a \$12,000 grant. The money was used to maintain, train, and recruit volunteers. We maintained a growing 25 person volunteer base at the NAR. Many local visitors to the area were in the process of being apart of the program along with two Kihei Charter School Seniors. The program is a success with volunteers, the larger community support, working with partners (NOAA, Digital Bus, Project Sealink, DAR, HWF, DOFAW, DOCARE, TNC and others), and bringing in local school children to work with the public on etiquette, education and more. It is a great feeling to empower the local children as they interact with the public speaking of etiquette and the positive response back from the visitors.

We did not leave due to lack of funding as suggested in the NARS June 4, 2008 minutes. We were told to "temporarily stop" by DOFAW. Weeks before this, I had a meeting with DOFAW and was surprised to hear his suggestion to temporarily stop the program. Although funding enables more presence in days and times covered, Action Ahihi would continue as a non-funded community based program. The volunteers and I genuinely want to help educate visitors on sustainable behaviors while enjoying the only Marine Reserve in our State. Matt gave the program an A+ as far as being on site and delivering the messages of Ahihi and our education table. A meeting was arranged with partners to see how we can keep this momentum continuing so the partners could get together discuss issues and find positive solutions. On April 29, 2008, we were asked by DOFAW, to temporarily stop our program at Waiala Cove and Maonakala at Ahihi Bay May 1 and the meeting was cancelled. Since that time, there has been no volunteer efforts from Action Ahihi.

Action Ahihi was the first program to initiate discussion with nearly every visitor at high impact entry zones. We have an on-site comment book (I left copies to NARS manager Randy Kennedy) and have hundreds of positive comments about the program. These people were very thankful that there is a program to deliver the important etiquette messages and encourage sustainable behaviors. They recognize the NAR and valuable assets we have to protect.

As with any preservation effort, there may be a few people that felt challenged by the program. They may have felt that the programs suggestions of better sustainable areas for entering and exiting limiting. The vast majority of visitors (could be up to 700 a day) appreciated the suggestions, exampled them and thanked us. Part of our duties was to be the eyes and ears of the area. Our presence might have prevented commercial operators from

illegally running operations in the NAR. It seems logical that we may have been a target for those who have been corrected by DOCARE or DOFAW due to reported incidents. Other recreational uses we reported, documented, and many cited were fishing, boating, taking rock, shells, opihi, washed up coral, fish from tidal pools, camping, lighting fires etc. As a certified lifeguard, I did 12 rescues this year. One man would have drowned had I not brought him out of the water. I feel the positives of the program and the documented results speak for themselves. This is a Natural Area Reserve.

Since our absence, the public tells us how we are missed and it is not the same at Ahihi; everyone is entering and exiting everywhere and standing all over delicate live areas. A local resident mentioned they had to speak to people who were netting fish at the cove.

The last Advisory Panel meeting voted unanimously to continue Action Ahihi. I realize DOFAW has the ultimate decision, but our hope is that this will come to fruition. Thanks for considering this testimony.

I would like to share one of many great stories of our program. Some of you may know of the Maui program called Pono “do what is right”. Sadly, a local family’s young son named Pono died in an accident. In his memory they started this movement to be Pono and do what’s right. They do cleanups, raise monies for charities and more. They have made “Pono, do what’s right” a logo, made by local working moms which they put on T-shirts, hats and visors. To quote them “Being pono, living pono and spreading pono . . . do what’s right . . . has been our passion, way of life and purpose for living.” One day this Auntie involved with the program came with her family to Ahihi. After listening to our etiquette talk and watching us with the public for an hour, she gave us a hug, took her pono visor off her head and gave it to us. She said after watching us for this hour, her hats were off to us and we deserved this hat for being pono. We still have the visor she gave us; coming from her it holds special meaning.

NARS Vision Statement:

We envision a future in which the Natural Area Reserve System contains the full range of Hawaii’s unique geology, plants, animals, and habitats and will be forever protected, enhanced and valued by all generations.

As we know the resources come first and this is what Action Ahihi stands for. We hope all can see the positive difference Action Ahihi made. I wish all agencies involved the best and look forward to working with them in the future to continue to make practical and positive differences.

Sincerely: MiQe Klemme. Volunteer Coordinator Action Ahihi. Keoneoio.Ahihi Kinau Advisory Board member.

Short list of Accomplishments

- I have 15 Marine and land based Naturalist certificates, diplomas, awards and recognitions. I have 5 certificates in Hawaiian Culture and Language. I have a BA degree. All volunteers are certified Naturalists through NOAA and other local partnership programs.
- A Kihei Charters High School representative liked our program and wanted their school to get involved with our outreach. Two Students just this month filled out volunteer papers and want to be active on weekends starting as soon as possible.
- We have completed about seven different outreach partnerships (Digital Bus, DOFAW, DAR, NOAA Humpback sanctuary, Project Sealink and Action Ahihi) for junior high kids from Kihei Charter Schools and all kids at Kihei Community Center. They do reef surveys, roles on reef, tidal pools, and then etiquette

with the public. We have two days coming up May 13, 14 2008 for Kids and this summer planning an event with the Kihei Community Association.

- Action Ahihi was first responder to many reported violations, taking pictures, getting HA numbers and reporting to DOFAW/DOCARE.
- I am a certified current lifeguard and have done twelve rescues this year, one witnessed by Ranger Judy where a man would have drowned right in front of us in shallow water had I not pulled him from the water.
- When weather conditions were not conducive for entry, we were there to speak to the conditions of the day and would communicate this to the public. On days where 100's may have entered, less than a quarter would enter. This may have saved many injuries to the public.
- Wedding rings/bands have been found and returned to visitors thanks to Action Ahihi's presence.
- We have assisted in first aid for 100's of coral cuts, stings or falls.
- We wrote out an etiquette statement in Japanese, German, and Spanish.
- A volunteer took pictures of a monk seal that rested in Ahihi for 2 days recently and sent them to Nicole Davis via Ranger Joe. We also send reports to the Monk Seal watch folk when visitors see them in the water. Most recently April 26, in Olowalu.
- Document what recreational activities are occurring in the NAR, how many and how often i.e. Kayak, Scuba, Snorkel, Paddle board, surf, outrigger, bike, hobbie cat etc.
- Have had two positive comments referred about this program in the Maui News and have collected several pages of support for the program and suggestions in a Comment book on site.
- Action Ahihi highlighted in DOFAW newsletter this year.
- Action Ahihi t-Shirts were made, binoculars, walkie-talkie, cell phones, reports, laminations, first aid kits etc.
- Action Ahihi was responsible for a landmark case when a commercial operator came into the bay, anchored and destroyed coral heads. We took pictures, before and after and took DAR out to the Coral heads so they could find them and glue them back together.
- □Have been involved with Kayaks and volunteers in cleaning out 100's of lbs of Ocean debris from the NAR, including, 400lb engines, industrial tires, 6ft. crates and more.
- Once a month we would pick up about 300 cigarette butts, and 50 bottle tops along with other miscellaneous trash daily from entry sign and beyond Waiala Cove.
- We supply biodegradable sunblock and mask defogger
- We have resource books, and literature for reference to Naturalist questions.
- The Ahihi Advisory Panel unanimously voted to continue the Action Ahihi program, and I was voted on to join the Advisory panel.

- We had 2 volunteer appreciation catered food events, where they were individually recognized for their dedicated hard work. Each volunteer participated in something unique other than just the outreach on site at Ahihi.