

Via electronic submittal

Natural Area Reserves Commission Meeting
Tuesday, June 18, 2024
11:00 AM via online Zoom

Aloha members of the NARS Commission,

My name is Kalei Lu‘uwai. My father is Bobby Lu‘uwai, one of the first special use permit holders for the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR, along with his brother Rudolph “Boogie” Lu‘uwai, and his cousin Leslie Kuloloio. My son is Mogul Lu‘uwai, one of the applicants under consideration today.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter for my ‘ohana. I am in strong support of the Lu‘uwai ‘Ohana’s permit being renewed so I can carry on the knowledge of my kūpuna in the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u area through my children. I also support my cousin Leinaala Kuloloio Vedder’s application.

As you are likely aware, the state designated ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u as a NAR without consulting lineal descendants of Honua‘ula and without regard for the implications it would have on the exercise of constitutionally protected traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights and practices. I grew up learning the specific fishing practices of this area from my grandparents as well as my father and uncles as part of my broader fishing training throughout Honua‘ula. Although saddened by the designation of the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR, we understood the importance of preserving this pristine place. When I eventually had kids, I regretted that I could not teach them how to fish in the places I had been taught by my kūpuna.

Over 25 years ago, my father and his brother initiated the process for our ‘ohana to fish in the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR. With the help of attorneys from the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation and cooperation of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, our family collectively participated in a working group to discuss the practicability of, concerns, and other details about permitting our ‘ohana to perpetuate our fishing traditions in this area in spite of the no-take restrictions. I regularly attended working group meetings and took detailed-notes. The end-result was a thorough report documenting the cultural fishing practices of the area, the legal framework to support a special use permit, and recommended permit conditions.

Soon after, my father and his brother applied for and were granted a permit. Their children (including myself) and grandchildren were individually named on the permit as eligible participants to enter the ‘Āhihi-Kīna‘u NAR and learn from them. I cherish the

times we went to 'Āhihi-Kīna'u while they were still able to walk for miles on the rugged 'a'a in the hot sun. Even though my children were not skilled enough at the time to fish, they learned valuable qualities for fishing such as how to observe the elements. Most importantly, they watched their kūpuna fish.

When my father and uncle were granted the permit, they self-imposed stringent conditions, including take limits, how many times a year we could fish, and the techniques used. This type of self-policing is inherent in the exercise of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights, which depend on self-restraint so that resources are not overtaxed and there is enough for future generations.

Now, my son is picking up this tradition for our 'ohana. He has attended many meetings with the NARS staff over the last year, making sure to keep me updated at every step of the way. I am relieved to know that my children are passionate about preserving the fishing traditions of Honua'ula. Just like my father and his brother did, our current application employs similar restraints.

Please sincerely consider our application.

Respectfully,

Kalei Lu'uwai