



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
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February 8, 2023

Chair Dawn Chang, BLNR
Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Legacy Land Conservation Commission
State of Hawai'i DLNR
1151 Punchbowl Street Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: ITEM 2.D. Kipuka Kuleana – Kamealoha Kuleana/conservation easement
Helele'a, Kaua'i**

Aloha mai e Chairperson Chang and LLCC,

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs' Mana i Maui Ola Strategic Plan recognizes the connection that Native Hawaiians have to the 'āina as a foundational strength. To our kūpuna, the land was life. Imbued with mana, our 'āina provides everything we need to survive. On an intimate level, Kānaka Maoli are connected to the land by the generations of kūpuna who lived on the land before us and whose iwi rest here. Thus, the emotional ties we have to our families, and the aloha we have for them, extends to the land that feeds us.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is partnering with descendants—the Wann and Akana 'ohana — and the nonprofit, Kīpuka Kuleana to protect **Kamealoha Kuleana** through a Conservation Easement and perpetuate its historic legacy as a stronghold of Hā'ena traditions, kalo farming, and the practice of 'ōahi.

Kamealoha Kuleana ("the place of love and gratitude") is one of five remaining kuleana lands in Hā'ena, Kaua'i and the last kuleana, this northwest of the pae 'aina. This kuleana land is still held and cared for by the lineal descendants of the original Māhele claimants.

Kamealoha Kuleana contains historical and intact lo'i kalo (wetland taro) likely dated between 400-1200 years old. These lo'i terraces span the property from mauka to makai, a stream and spring fed 'auwai that runs along its border, iwi kūpuna (ancestral

remains), and was the home of Alexander Hailama, an ‘ōahi (firebrand) practitioner and kumu who taught and prepared for ‘ōahi ceremonies at Kamealoha. Hailama and La‘a were two of the last practitioners to do ‘ōahi in 1924. It is important to know that there are at least two known burials on the property.

The Lineal family, the Wann’s having been caring for this land alongside other lineal descendants for centuries and are more than capable of managing and stewarding the conservation effort to restore this land. Their ancestors were born on the South west boundary of the property. Their family is integral in the caring of the Kamealoha kuleana parcel which is part of the larger lo‘i and ahupua‘a system of Limahuli. Today, it serves as an educational site for school and educational groups.

Moreover the Wann ‘ohana has been vital stewards and advocates for the Hui Maka‘ainana o Makana - Lo‘i Kalo Stewardship located in the ahupua‘a of Haena in the moku of Halele‘a, Kaua‘i. The Wann ‘ohana was a lead family in the organization of the first Community Based Fishing Area (CBFA) in Hawai‘i. As a lead member of Hui Maka‘ainana o Makana, the Wann family was supported by and worked in partnership with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for the success of the CBFA for Hui Maka‘ainana o Makana.

On Kaua‘i, long-time families are losing connections to ancestral lands due to escalating land values, rising taxes, restricted access, and development pressure. Surrounded by gated luxury mansions, this ‘āina is a powerful assertion of Hawaiian values, lifeways and commitment to upholding kuleana against all odds. Protecting Kamelaoha Kuleana will ensure that it can serve as a kīpuka (place of community caretaking and cultural restoration) for future generations.

As the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau Trustee, I fully support the descendants—the Wann and Akana ‘ohana and their partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the nonprofit Kīpuka Kuleana to protect Kamealoha Kuleana through stewardship and a Conservation Easement and perpetuate its historic legacy as a stronghold of Hā‘ena traditions, kalo farming, and the practice of ‘ōahi.

Mahalo nui for your time and support to perpetuate kuleana, ahupua‘a-based natural resource management and connection to place through protection of cultural landscapes and family lands.

‘O wau iho nō,



Dan Ahuna
Trustee – Kaua‘i & Ni‘ihau, Office of Hawaiian Affairs