



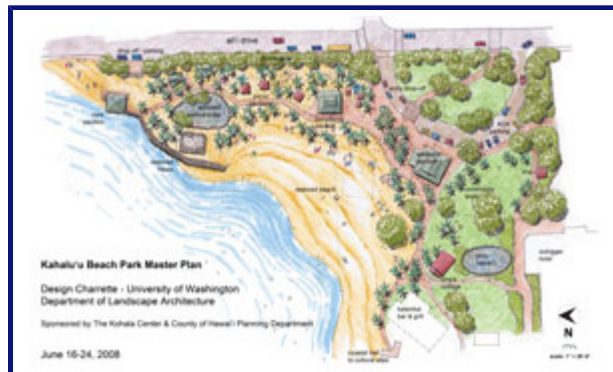
LEAFLET September 2008 Front Page

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Blessed by theKupuna

"My passion to restore this park is due largely to the kupuna (Hawaiian elders) that have passed on...many giving their time to share with experts their thoughts on how to take care of this sacred, life-giving place. It has been my desire for many years to help bring back the respect, ambiance, and beauty of Kahalu'u Beach and Bay, according to the wishes of our kupuna." – Cindi Punihaole, Public Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, The Kohala Center

For many years kupuna have shared their dreams for the restoration of Kahalu'u Beach Park, only to find that their visions were archived on a shelf, gathering dust. Cindi Punihaole refused to let their dreams die, and so she began talking to people, including planners and politicians, to see if anything could be done to move the restoration effort forward. She believes *na kupuna* and *ke Akua* (God) led her to Brad Kurokawa, deputy director for the County Planning Department. This past summer Kurokawa, a trained landscape architect, invited five University of Washington (UW) landscape architecture students and their professor, Iain Robertson, to Hawai'i Island to work with the community to produce a master plan for the park.



The UW team hosted a weeklong design charrette at the park in June. Community members, including homeless residents, were encouraged to express themselves and imagine a park that embraced their wishes. UW landscape architect students evaluated the information they gathered from the community meetings and created a dynamic master plan which embodies the community's vision. The team captured the highest hopes of the community to restore this special place in the heart of Kona, in a *pono* (respectful) planning process that can serve as a model for community in action. [Read more](#) about the Kahalu'u master planning process, as relayed by Cindi Punihaole and Brad Kurokawa.

'Aina Lei Ali'i: Lands Adorned by the Chiefs



Photo: (left to right) Kepa Maly, Uncle Mitchell Fujisaka, and Cindi Punihaole looking at an old *kuleana* (property) map of Kahalu'u. Uncle Mitchell is sharing stories about the family names listed on the map. Photo by Onaona Maly.

History of Kahalu'u and Keauhou and life stories of kupuna who lived there are being recorded and shared thanks to a [Preserve America Grant](#) awarded to The Kohala Center by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Grant monies will be used to coproduce a cultural brochure on the *ahupua'a* (Hawaiian land division) of Kahalu'u and Keauhou and to present on DVD the area's history and life stories of kupuna.

"The work involves documenting and sharing historical and cultural information about Kahalu'u Bay, restoring the Hawaiian sense of respect for this ancient gathering place and its natural resources, and for teaching and reinforcing respectful behavior on the part of visitors to protect the bay's precious coastal environment." - Allen Tom, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program Coordinator

Photo: Kepa Maly (**left**) interviewing Uncle Allen Wall (**right**) for the DVD. Photo by Onaona Maly.

The DVD features kupuna Mitchell Fujisaka and Allen Wall sharing their stories with ethnographer Kepa Maly. Maly gives additional background on the *ahupua'a* gleaned from old Hawaiian language newspapers. When completed in late September, the DVD will be available from The Kohala Center. It will be shown via Web cast at the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort and on [The Kohala Center's Web site](#).



The full-color brochure, *Ho'iho'i Kulana Wahi Pana* (Restoring Sacred Places), shares the special cultural significance of the sacred sites of Kahalu'u and Keauhou. The brochure was produced in part through the Preserve America Grant and through a partnership with the Outrigger Keauhou Resort, The Kohala Center, and the National Marine Sanctuaries Program-Pacific Islands Region. Available at The Kohala Center office and the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Hotel, the brochure is also downloadable as a resource at NOAA's [National Marine Sanctuaries Web site](#).

Looking Five Years into Our Food Future



Photo: Crop production on Hawai'i Island with table showing percentages of statewide production from 1992 County Ag Plan.

More than fifteen years have passed since the County of Hawai'i last updated its Agricultural Development Plan. Since that time, the last of the sugar plantations have closed and many acres of former cane land now lie fallow. The County imports roughly 85% of the food consumed here on the island - yet 60% of all cultivated lands in the state are situated on Hawai'i Island. We are exporting most of what we grow, and local food production is in jeopardy due to rising fuel, fertilizer, and shipping costs. The County Department of Research and Development (R & D) is spearheading an effort to draft a new Ag Plan for the County, to address critical issues of food security in a changing world economy. The new plan will help to provide a roadmap for resource allocation, policy making, land-use decisions, and further diversification of agricultural markets on the island.

Through a grant from County R & D, The Kohala Center is partnering with [Agricon Hawai'i LLC](#), an

island-based agricultural consulting firm, to draft the plan. Island-wide meetings are planned in September to inform the public about the planning process and to gather input from local farmers and interested residents. An ad hoc committee, composed primarily of island residents who are in the business of farming, will participate in helping to draft the plan from start to finish. Regional meetings in Hilo and Kona were held in August to directly involve commodity groups and others involved in agriculture on Hawai'i Island. TKC and Agricon hope to submit a draft plan to the County by November 2008 and a final plan by spring 2009. The plan will make recommendations for the next five years, a critical time frame for transitioning the island to a more sustainable food system.

David Rietow, managing member of Agricon Hawai'i LLC, has faith that this plan will be different from those that preceded it: *"Most of the pertinent information will be obtained from farmers, making this plan experience based. Implementation will be an economic necessity for both the County and for agriculture on the island."*

[View a list](#) of upcoming island-wide listening and learning sessions.

New Director: Hawai'i Island Food Systems Project

Photo: [Jeremy Kwock](#) visits [Tom Baldwin's farm](#) in North Kohala.

"The Kohala Center recognizes that increasing our local food supply and creating effective food distribution systems is an essential part of the transition to greater island self-reliance and sustainable economic security. Jeremy Kwock, born and raised in Mo'ili'ili on O'ahu, brings a strong business background, a commitment to Hawai'i's future, and an abundance of youthful energy to his new role as Director of the Food Systems Project." – Betsy Cole, deputy director of The Kohala Center



Jeremy Kwock assumed the big job of managing the Hawai'i Island Food Systems Project in late July. Kwock attended high school in Honolulu at the University Laboratory School. He received a B.S. in computer science from the Illinois Institute of Technology and an M.B.A. from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business. After working at a financial services firm in Los Angeles, Kwock realized that his heart was here, in Hawai'i. Jeremy is happy to be home, applying his business acumen to the critical job of increasing the local market share for island-grown food.

"There are two parts to my job. First, I need to find ways to support and increase local food production and consumption on Hawai'i Island. Second, I seek to create changes in the food system to improve its sustainability. My first priority is to provide whatever assistance I can to local farmers and local food companies. If there are no local farmers, then there can be no local food consumption. My role is to help local farmers with business planning and the creation of business plans, market, research, strategy advice, and consulting." – Jeremy Kwock, Hawai'i Island Food Systems Project Director

Read the rest of [Jeremy Kwock's story](#).

Understories: Focus on School Gardens



Photo: Isaac Sproat weeding a garden bed at the Niuli'i Youth Farm Project in North Kohala.

Most of us on Hawai'i Island are concerned about our food future. The good news is that non-commercial agricultural initiatives on the island are thriving. In just one year The Kohala Center's School Gardens Network has expanded to serve 35 school gardens around the island! This month, we'd like to share the story of one such garden, the Niuli'i Youth Farm Project in North Kohala.

"How perfect for the community to get to know the varied and rich garden programs being pioneered in all corners of the community.

These young men and women and their mentors are taking on learning the knowledge of how to grow food. I think by telling their stories, we can help each of them receive the help and support they all need." - Nancy Redfeather, Director, Hawai'i Island School Gardens Network

Join with us in celebrating the success of the [Niuli'i Youth Farm Project](#).

Tour of Waiakamali Gulch Restoration Project Site Saturday, September 13, 8am - 3pm

Photo: Native dry forest species within the Koiaia Tree Sanctuary. Photo by Melora Purell.

Follow the rainfall gradient up the gulch of Waiakamali Stream - from Kohala Mountain Road to the edge of the Pu'u O 'Umi Natural Area Reserve. Join Melora Purell, Kohala Watershed Partnership (KWP) Coordinator, and Brad Lau, KWP Field Operations Leader, for this one day driving and walking tour. This gulch is one of two places on the planet where, in a span of just two miles, the environment changes from a dry forest with an average annual rainfall of 30 inches to a lush rain forest that receives over 100 inches of precipitation each year.



Highlights of this Kohala Mountain adventure include a walk around the Koiaia Tree Sanctuary, where you will experience a rare protected dry forest. Next stop is a mesic (moist) forest remnant with plants seen in few other places in Kohala. Here the group will spend an hour helping these plants to survive by pulling weeds, especially banana poka, an invasive vine that kills mature trees. After a lunch break at the top of the gulch, enjoy a short walk into the rain forest of the Pu'u O 'Umi Natural Area Reserve, State land designated for protection because of its high-quality native forest. The Kohala Watershed Partnership is working diligently in the Waiakamali Gulch to restore this native forest.



Photo: Native Olomea survives only in gulches where it has been protected from cattle grazing. Photo by Melora Purell.

Bring rain gear, wear good hiking or rubber boots, and be prepared for relatively strenuous walking over uneven, muddy terrain. Tools, gloves, snacks, water, and lunch are provided. This program is for members of The Kohala Center's [Circle of Friends](#). There is no fee to participate for members.

Only six spots are still available for this excursion. Download a [registration form](#) or call 808-887-6411 for reservations.

Manta Ray Night Dive Sunday, October 5, 2 - 10pm

Photo: Keller Laros, our guide for this trip, with Costeau, one of the manta rays spotted frequently by the Manta Pacific Research Foundation. Cousteau, a young male about 6 feet across, was first seen in 1997. Photo by Doug Farr.



Experience Hawaii's beautiful manta rays up close on a chartered boat tour with Jack's Diving Locker. This special learning event begins with a presentation on manta rays by experts from the [Manta Pacific Research Foundation](#). Then head out to sea for an afternoon dive or snorkel at Garden Eel Cove, a coral reef inhabited by moray eels, garden eels, and rare fish such as flame angelfish and nudibranchs. Back onboard the boat, enjoy the Kona sunset and refreshments. The highlight of this trip comes after nightfall, when you'll see manta rays glide and turn in the darkness, attracted by dive lights in the water. Divers and snorkelers are invited to explore the night reef and experience bioluminescence in the water around them. If you sit still on the bottom, the manta rays may even glide over your head.

Manta rays, or *hahalua*, are elasmobranchs and cousins of sharks. Mantas have cephalic fins on the front of their body that unfurl to help funnel water and food into their mouths. Manta rays also have wide pectoral fins that look like wings and can span more than 20 feet across. Mantas have no teeth or tail stinger, and they are shy and completely harmless. Manta rays feed on microscopic plankton such as larvae and copepods. They capture their food by swimming through the water with their mouths open: this is called filter feeding. To capture the large amounts of food they need to sustain themselves, they sometimes somersault through the water - a sight frequently seen by night divers and snorkelers off the Kona Coast. Come see their marvelous acrobatics for yourself!



Photo: One of the many mantas at the viewing sight, attracted by the plankton in the water that gather around the lights. Photo by Keller Laros.

Those wishing to snorkel or dive should be proficient swimmers, and divers must have their dive certification. All participants should be comfortable onboard a boat on the open ocean.

Only 12 spaces are available for this event. The fee is \$50 for Kohala Center [Circle of Friends](#) members and \$150 for new membership plus event participation. Download a [registration form](#) today or call 808-887-6411 to make your reservations. For more information on Manta Rays, visit the [Manta Pacific Foundation Web site](#).

"Aloha E!" from Waimea Nature Camp

Photo: Annika Berezney and Tøve Fostvedt set a new fashion trend with their tree fern hats! Photo by Melora Purell.

For four weeks this summer Waimea Nature Camp (WNC) brought together 59 young people and three leaders to explore the natural world through play, field trips, and creative expression. Each morning the group gathered to chant "Aloha E!" (greetings) to the spirits, people, birds, and winds of Kohala Mountain from their home base at Ulu La'au, the Waimea Nature Park. According to beloved camp director Melora Purell, the goal of Waimea Nature Camp is "to develop in children an ethic of stewardship for our forests, streams, oceans, and other natural resources by engaging their minds through natural science and touching their hearts with the beauty and power of nature."



Purell invites all 2008 WNC alumni to a festive "Reunion" day on Columbus Day, Monday, October 13, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. All campers from winter, spring, and summer camps are welcomed to Ulu La'au for a day of play, exploration, creativity, and service. Following camp will

be a family potluck dinner at the picnic tables. Camp dates for 2009 are January 5-9, March 23-April 3, and summer 2009 (dates TBD). Mark your calendars now and look for more information coming your way soon.



Photo: Ryan Touchet shows us his captured Bufo tadpoles. Photo by Melora Purell.

Quotes from 2008 parents:

"The price is an unbelievable bargain - truly making this program accessible to all keiki in the community."

"I never had to push my daughter to get her going on camp days - she was out the door before me in the morning!"

"My son came home exhausted and happy. I haven't seen him this satisfied with a summer activity before."

Campers said the best part of camp was:

"Playing outside in the dirt."

"Climbing the big tree at the end of our hike."

"Getting to know new people and being able to have fun with them."

"Exploring the streams, climbing, and getting dirty."

"Learning about nature."

[Back Page](#)



LEAFLET September 2008

Back Page

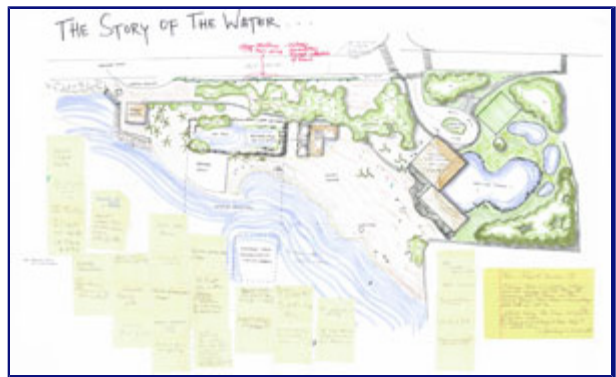
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Community in Action

By Cindi Punihaole

Image: The Story of the Water, a preliminary sketch prepared by the UW design team.

The first Kahalu'u Beach Park Master Plan community meeting was held on June 18 with over 51 participants attending. Folks were split into three working groups. Brad Kurokawa requested that each person write on post-it notes what was special about Kahalu'u (values) and his or her vision for the new park. The UW students, their professor Iain Robertson, and Brad took those notes and clustered them into four categories (values and vision "themes"). These themes were then woven into four conceptual alternative plans: The Story of the Water, The Story of the Land, The Story of the People, and The Sacred Place.



This part of the process was done in 24 hours. The design team met with the community again on the evening of June 19, a meeting which 25 people attended. The group looked over the four preliminary plans and gave their input. Considering this input, the team created the Kahalu'u Beach Park Master Plan and presented it to the community on June 21, with approximately 25 people in attendance. We taped the final presentation and this video will be aired in late August on Na Leo public television.

Pat Engelhard and James Komata from the County Parks and Recreation (P & R) Department participated in the development of the Master Plan during the charrette. In the beginning of July, Brad and I met again with P & R administrators to present the completed plan to them. Engelhard, Director of P & R, was quite excited and gave the plan her blessing.



Image: The Sacred Place, a preliminary sketch prepared by the UW design team.

This plan has already served as a catalyst to major discussions on the proper and pono way to restore the park. Many, many, many discussions have taken place since the plan was created, including discussions with State and local political leaders and officials, community members, ReefTeachers, Kamehameha Investment Corporation management and staff, Kamehameha Schools, Keauhou Beach Resort management and staff, coastal geologists,

NOAA, and so on. At the end of July, Brad presented the Master Plan to the State and Federal Coastal

Zone Management Evaluation Team and asked them to visit Kahalu'u the following day. They were impressed by the history of the area and by how we are trying to restore this park with a "sense of place." With their help, I am currently working on bringing a team of coastal geologists to Kahalu'u in late September to share recommendations on how to properly restore the shoreline. We are working together to integrate Western and Native Hawaiian practices in order to restore the health of Kahalu'u Bay.

This is how a pono planning process takes place. It is how all charrettes should be run. Most of the time we see government and communities fighting amongst each other. We have shown that there is a way to work together for the betterment of the people and the community and the children to come.

Aloha Is Our Intelligence

By Brad Kurokawa

Photo: The magical University of Washington Design Team (**left to right**): Professor Iain Robertson; Annika McIntosh; Brad Kurokawa, deputy planning director of the County of Hawai'i; Riisa Conklin; Patrick Keegan; Gia Clark; Cindi Punihaole, public outreach and volunteer coordinator of the The Kohala Center; and Eric Streeby.



During the week of June 16 through June 24, through the collaborative sponsorship of The Kohala Center and the County of Hawai'i Planning Department and with the support of the Keauhou Beach Resort and numerous other Kona individuals and organizations, a group of five University of Washington (UW) landscape architecture students and their professor Iain Robertson engaged the Kona community in a design charrette to create a master plan for Kahalu'u Beach Park, a popular community beach park fronting Kahalu'u Bay. Kahalu'u Beach Park is a significant community park and could be considered as serving a district park purpose with its high use though relatively small size.

A "charrette" is a French term literally meaning "cart." In the 1800s at the Ecoles des Beaux Arts school, this wagon-like cart was used to pick up art and architectural student projects at posted deadlines. Typically intense activity occurred until the deadline hour as the charrette made its way through the studio. Nowadays, "charrette" is used in the design community to describe a collaborative planning process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties to create and support a feasible plan. As a participant in this effort, I was privileged to be part of what turned out to be an extraordinary transformative process.

The essence of the six-day charrette and the events leading up to it could be summed up by a quote from a dear friend, Manulani Meyer: "Aloha is our intelligence." The seed for the charrette was planted when I was approached by Cindi Punihaole of The Kohala Center, who manages the Kahalu'u Bay Project and who inquired about how to go about making improvements at this popular beach park. It was apparent after a few minutes of conversation with Cindi that this was someone who possessed deep aloha and passion for Kahalu'u, Kona – the place and its people. Born and raised in Kona with roots that go back generations and now coordinating a cadre of 200 plus ReefTeach volunteers, Cindi shared her vision for Kahalu'u. This vision reflected the desires of many local kupuna, many whom have passed on. It was clear from Cindi's enthusiasm and commitment that this was not just a project, but a kuleana, a firmly grounded and inspired responsibility.



Image: The Story of the People, a preliminary sketch prepared by the UW design team.

We agreed that to seek improvements for the County owned park, which sits on land dotted with archaeological sites and a rich cultural history, we would need a master plan, a road map for the park's future development. A few minutes of brainstorming acknowledged the reality of a limited budget, resulting in the idea of developing a master plan using a design charrette with landscape architecture students under the guidance of their professor and myself (I have a background in landscape architecture). The Kohala Center was used to

working with various educational institutions and was open to expanding this resource pool. The notion sounded like a win-win solution as costs would be substantially less than hiring professional consultants, students would gain invaluable practical experience, and Cindi and the community would have a master plan to initiate the process for needed park improvements. Finally, to the degree that the charrette was planned to engage interested parties, we could also create support through partnerships in the community with individuals, non-governmental organizations, private sector and government, a desired outcome of the County's Community Development Planning process. Assistance with planning and facilitating the charrette would come from the County of Hawai'i Planning Department. An invitation to colleague and friend Professor Iain Robertson at the UW Department of Landscape Architecture was graciously accepted and our adventure began.

From the time students Leslie Gianna Clark, Riisa Conklin, Patrick Keegan, Annika McIntosh, and Eric Streeby, and Professor Iain Robertson arrived from Seattle, Washington, Cindi welcomed and showered all of us with generous hospitality that can only be described as authentic aloha. Gracious introductions to kupuna and local residents; opening *pule* (prayers) and *oli* (chants) honoring the ancestors and *'aumakua* (family or personal gods); bottles of water and fruit juice; snacks of fresh pineapple, jaboticaba from her yard, li hing mui mango and other local goodies; warm hugs, smiles, and words of appreciation and encouragement created a space and desire to *kokua* (help) from our highest individual and collective abilities. This same aloha drew many local families and residents to the three community gatherings that took place within the space of four days, Wednesday through Saturday. It was also behind the generous donations of services, time, and goods that supported the charrette.

Photo: Tut Kamoku sharing *mo'olelo* (tales) at the first "talk story" session.



At the first two "talk story" sessions held at the pavilion at Kahalu'u Beach Park, input was gathered through facilitated group exercises that encouraged people to share what was special to them about Kahalu'u and what they would like to see there. The student team listened and used the input to generate conceptual alternatives attempting to translate community desires into physical form. Discussions over the few days covered a range of topics, including: the sacredness of the land; the rich history of Kahalu'u and the surrounding ahupua'a; restoration of the historic fishpond and heiau (temple); damage to the coral reef; the merits of retaining fishing access; the disappearance of the sandy beach; the quality of the bay's water; the dilapidated condition of the park facilities; what types of new facilities the community desired; and the impact of the vast number of visitors and local users on the 'aina and ocean waters.

In short cycles of 24 hours alternative ideas through drawings were brought back to the community participants to verify and critique. This led to further plan refinement, but more importantly, served to connect people through conversations and respectful dialogue. Through this process issues were clarified and trade-offs were wrestled with collectively. The results were genuine understanding and recognition that we could work together for a greater common good. Folks from different walks of life with

differing perspectives got to know each other. Decisions were arrived at. New friendships were formed and old ones strengthened, which can be summoned in future steps. And through these relationships true progress can unfold and be sustained – progress that reflects long-term vision derived for the greater good of the community. This is the power of meaningfully engaging community.



Photo: Crunch time: translating ideas, giving form, and drawing it up. **(Left to right)** Gia Clark, Patrick Keegan, Annika McIntosh, Eric Streeby, Riisa Conklin, and Iain Robertson.

At week's end the team gathered one last time for a mahalo dinner. The Kona sunset cast its soft orange pink hues upon the Keauhou land and seascape, warmly embracing and transforming all as we gratefully reveled in the beauty and reflections of aloha.

By engaging the community in a participatory manner and documenting the process, there is strong impetus for the County Parks and Planning Departments to "adhere" to the DRAFT plan as created. In fact this project acted on the proposed Kona CDP policy and action PUB – 7.1a "Use charrettes to the extent practicable in the design of County facilities to involve the community, broaden the design input with multi-disciplinary expertise, and stimulate creativity." The objective of the charrette process and the stated outcome was to INITIATE community conversation on a vision for the park and use this as a springboard to continue the process of moving the Park vision forward, adapting it as more input and information is gathered. I believe strong community engagement and support is the key to 'institutionalize' the draft plan as the community's vision because we can call upon the community to support it with Parks and Planning Department administrators. Parks administrators have been kept in the loop, are supportive, and actually were invited to participate in the process. As the momentum continues to build and detailed information is gathered regarding park design and costs, we can identify funding needs and alternate funding sources that can be used to implement the final master plan.

This type of active engagement is new for many in County government. The Planning and Research and Development Departments recently sponsored [charrette planning/management training](#) for 30 County staff, including two Parks Project Managers. I participated in the training. Since I have a design background and have been on charrette teams before, I decided to use this project as a "practice run."

Image: The Story of the Land, a preliminary sketch prepared by the UW design team.



Logical next steps in this process are as follows:

1. **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** Continue to build community support and awareness of what has been started. Cindi is doing a marvelous job at talking to a variety of people and organizations that at future dates, we will be able to call upon for resources and support.
2. **TECHNICAL OPTIONS:** Based on the preferred Draft Plan which included a restored beach, we are now seeking more detailed "technical" (i.e. coastal geological and engineering, ecological, etc.) input on what is possible scientifically in terms of beach restoration and impacts on coastal waters. Thus, Cindi is working to bring in a team of coastal geologists, scientists, and engineers to give us realistic scenarios that deal with this issue. What are the techniques and physical solutions available to us (i.e. removal of existing walls, engineered/hardened shoreline,

quoins, etc.)? Then we can determine the order of magnitude costs of the various technical solutions.

3. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOLLOW-UP:** Here we want to report back to the community the technical options so they can help make the decision as to which option they prefer. This will provide the basis for establishing a solid community-supported and technically sound Preferred Schematic Park Plan. Overall schematic costs and scope can be identified and next steps taken to implement the remaining steps in the design process and eventual construction.
4. **PERMIT SCOPING:** Determine the necessary Federal/State and County permitting steps for park construction.
5. **PERMITTING & DESIGN DEVELOPMENT:** Hire a planning/engineering consultant team to prepare permitting documents and design/construction documents.
6. **CONSTRUCTION:** Hire a contractor to build the designed park. Celebrate!

A heartfelt *mahalo nui loa* to The Kohala Center for the opportunity to participate in this transformative effort and to Cindi Punihaole for making it so. Special thanks goes out to Iain Robertson and the students from the University of Washington Landscape Architecture Department for their openness, sensitivity, and receptivity and for putting their hearts and souls into this endeavor. Also blessings to the Keauhou Beach Resort, Paul Horner and his staff who accommodated all of our needs during the charrette, and the numerous individuals for their kokua of time, resources, and aloha to support this effort. Mahalo to Pat Engelhard and her staff at the County of Hawai'i Parks Department for their assistance and support. And last but not least, aloha no to all those from our community who joined us in person and spirit. We are grateful for your time and commitment to make our home a better place to live.

Editor's Note: Brad Kurokawa has served as the deputy director for the County of Hawai'i Planning Department since January 2006. He was born and raised in Hawai'i. He graduated from the University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture in Seattle, Washington. He has practiced as a landscape architect for 25 years, primarily in the Pacific Northwest, before returning home in 2005. His interest, passion, and focus is sustainable site planning and design with particular emphasis on creating evocative regenerative landscapes – places that combine the best of human culture and ecological processes, leaving the 'aina in an enriched state capable of sustaining itself. Brad is grateful to be home.

Read "[Hawaiian Park Reborn](#)," a feature article in UW's *University Week*.

New Directions

By Jeremy Kwock



Photo: Jeremy Kwock in Singapore, for a USC MBA project.

Earlier this year, I left my job in marketing for a financial services firm. After a bit of job hunting, I received and was considering an offer from another company in Los Angeles. I realized that accepting this offer would mean that I would need to stay in the LA area indefinitely, when my heart was really in Hawai'i. I decided to return to Hawai'i, and I was fortunate enough to be offered this position at The Kohala Center shortly after I moved back to the islands.

I knew this was the right position for me when I was interviewing for other jobs. Another potential employer asked me where else I was applying, and I realized that I sounded more excited and enthusiastic about the Food Systems job than about the job I was interviewing for.

The Food Systems position interested me for a variety of reasons. First, I wanted to work in an organization that, whether for-profit or non-profit, benefited other people and the community. Second, I was interested in a position that could make use of my business background— and improving the economic sustainability and viability of farms and other agricultural organizations will be an important part of my work. Third, I wanted a position with the potential to make a positive impact—and supporting agriculture is fundamentally important to Hawai'i Island, from both economic and strategic perspectives.

Photo: Jeremy at his USC graduation.



I've had a number of different experiences that, together, will help me get started in my work. Of course, the business background that I acquired is very helpful in analyzing and providing support to local agriculture. I was briefly exposed to island agricultural issues during a summer internship in Hilo while in business school. I also have a bit of operational experience in food processing issues, having worked in the laboratory of a food processor company doing microbiological and chemical tests. I also have some experience with legislative and government issues from my tenure as an aide at the state legislature in 2004. I worked for a state senator, creating his newsletter, helping the committee clerk with committee hearings, monitoring legislation, and responding to constituent inquiries. Working there provided me with a firsthand look at the legislative process. I think having this breadth of exposure will be very helpful as I move forward in my new role on Hawai'i Island.

I started my position on July 21. I think the best part, so far, has been the interest people take in my work. I recently attended a conference on food sustainability in Honolulu organized by LEAF (Laulima Eco-friendly Alliance of Farms). When I mentioned my job at The Kohala Center (TKC), I was told that the LEAF conference was inspired by the food systems conference mounted by TKC last year. It's fantastic to see that people realize that food sustainability is a crucial issue for both the island and the state.

Since July I've worked on research with one of the local dairymen and assisted in drafting a business plan for a local farm and value-added startup. The types of assistance I can provide to local farmers include business planning, assistance in creating business plans, marketing, research, strategy advice, and consulting.

My biggest challenge in this position is managing the large scope of work. Fortunately, I have experienced strong support for my work both internally at The Kohala Center and externally in the community. TKC has been helping me to get situated, arranging introductions to local farmers and business people, and providing guidance with regard to my initial projects. The entire staff has been great, and I extend a warm mahalo to Betsy Cole, deputy director of The Kohala Center, and to Nancy Redfeather, director of the Hawai'i Island School Gardens Network, who have spent a lot of time orienting and training me these past few weeks.

People in the community have shown great interest in my work, which could lead to future partnerships. For the most part, the people I have met seem impressed with The Kohala Center and the scope of the issues we are addressing.



Photo: Jeremy at the Hilo Farmer's Market.

Island residents can do one simple thing to support my work: support local agriculture, especially by purchasing food produced by farmers on Hawai'i Island. Similarly, stores and retailers on Hawai'i Island can contribute greatly to sustainable agriculture in Hawai'i by purchasing, carrying, and selling food from local farmers.

I welcome ideas and suggestions from the public, as well as referrals to farmers or businesses that I might be able to assist. Contact me via e-mail at jkwock@kohalacenter.org, or call me at 808-430-3489 (business cell), or at The Kohala Center office at 808-887-6411.

Niuli'i Youth Farm Project

By Dashiell Kuhr with Photos by Jeremy Kwock

Photo: (left to right) Some of the folks involved: Joshua Campollo, student; Jordon Kaneshiro, student; Kenoe Dean, student; Arvin Campollo, student; Golden Raymond, student; Thomas Baldwin, landowner and founder; Cyrus Kuhr, Dashiell's son; Erika Shickle, project coordinator; and Dashiell Kuhr, program director.



"If you eat more healthy food, you feel better. Taking care of the 'aina makes it more beautiful." – Jordan Kaneshiro, student participant in the Niuli'i Youth Farm Project

I started the Niuli'i Youth Farm Project earlier this year with the specific purpose of educating Kohala youth and community members about sustainable agriculture, permaculture design, and agroforestry. I have a background of running school garden programs for the World Beat Cultural Center, conducting farm field trips at La Milpa Organica Farm, and doing classroom education Point Loma High School, all in San Diego. Working on these programs showed me what an impact school gardens and farms have on the eating habits and everyday actions of our youth. These programs inspire lifestyle changes that are very important right now for the future health of people and the planet.

Tom Baldwin, a North Kohala farmer, made land available for the project and provided start-up funding. Tom Baldwin and Shannon Casey founded the [Uluwehi Farm and Nursery](#) with the purpose of creating a diverse community germ-plasm and using it as an example for teaching permaculture design, agroforestry, and sustainable agriculture. I connected with Tom through a mutual friend, a botanist, mycologist, and teacher, Denis Sharmad. He brought Tom to the farm where I lived and worked, La Milpa Organica Farm in San Diego. Tom saw what we were doing and it was in alignment with his vision, so he invited me to Kohala.

The Kohala Center also provided some of the initial funding. We recruited several young men (Kohala High School students) from the [Ka Hana No'eau Mentorship Program](#), directed by David Fuertes. David was also our connection to Kohala High School, since he was the agriculture teacher there for many years. He did some very cutting-edge programs with his students. He is now retired and directs the mentorship program. Many of our students come from that program.

As word of the program spread, we recruited several more boys from the community. These boys participated in an eight-week internship this past summer, and we taught them many aspects of organic agriculture, permaculture, and agroforestry. The youth are now cultivating food on about two acres of arable land that previously had not been cultivated.



Photo: Joshua Campollo weeding a recently planted dinosaur kale bed.

The immediate goals of the project are to encourage youth and their families to grow edible plants and trees, to teach respect for and knowledge of traditional Hawaiian food crops, and to teach techniques for maintaining and developing sustainable agriculture in Hawai'i. Long-term goals are to inspire Kohala youth to seek careers in agriculture and to create a year-round stipend intern program for Kohala High School students. We will measure our success by monitoring the number of program participants who choose careers in sustainable agriculture, support local farms with their purchasing power, and grow edible plants and trees in the local community. This farm project will contribute to the local food economy of Hawai'i by teaching youth to grow food and sell it and by encouraging the younger generation to take up careers in agriculture.

Several community members are volunteering for the project and assisting with the youth farm by cultivating the land and teaching the youth various agriculture principles. Starseed Ranch is supporting the project with equipment and labor. These new partners became involved because they are excited to support a project that is working to make Kohala more sustainable and food self-sufficient.

The project has already grown in terms of the number of people involved and the amount of land being cultivated. The garden started with one person and three 80-foot garden beds. Now there are seven adult project members, seven youth students (with many more interested), and sixteen 80-foot garden beds under cultivation. The field was brown, tilled soil when the project started. The youth have planted and maintained more than half of that open field in the last two months, creating a green garden sanctuary.

Photo: Students hand till the ground in preparation for planting.



Offshoots of the program include cooking classes for the participants and sending participants home with fruit trees and cuttings for their home gardens, such as bananas, papayas, sweet potato cuttings, etc. We have also provided detailed propagation workshops, on topics such as air layering and how to take cuttings. Our students' diets are definitely being impacted by the program: participants have started eating fresh fruits, vegetables, and coconuts each day at the program. And I have been receiving reports that they are improving their diets at home, eating more fresh local fruits and veggies. I am seeing changes in these young men within a two month period. That is powerful: if we can inspire them to start eating fresh local organic foods, and to plant trees and plants in their local community, we are improving their health, their family members' health, and the quality of life in the community.

This project is beneficial to the youth served because it is empowering them to create a happier and healthier life for themselves and others, and it is opening doors for careers in agriculture and agroforestry in Hawai'i and in other states and countries. It is also raising awareness about why native forests and their watersheds should be protected and expanded.

The garden is just starting to provide a lot of food. The youth will sell this food at several upcoming events and as part of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. A CSA program encourages local residents to pay a subscription for a weekly box of vegetables and fruit. It is a good arrangement for both the farmer and the member because the member gets fresh seasonal produce and supports a local farmer. Our CSA will be starting in September. There will be a drop spot in Waimea and in Hawi, for produce pick up. We are accepting members on a first-come, first-served basis. To subscribe, call 808-896-1331.



Photo: (left to right) Joshua Campollo, Isaac Sproat, and Arvin Campollo with freshly harvested apple bananas and Jamaican lilikoi ready to be sold at the Waimea Farmer's Market.

I envision the garden project growing into a year-round youth run farm and nursery, in which youth grow food, trees, and plants which they sell and donate to the community and plant throughout Kohala as part of food sustainability and native forest restoration projects. We already have access to hundreds of acres of land for this kind of food sustainability and agroforestry projects.

The community is supporting the project by providing tools, equipment, labor, and land. The connection through The Kohala Center to the School Gardens Network is an important resource that allows educators in the field to connect, share ideas, and then improve services and programs provided to participants. Nancy Redfeather has been an excellent resource for information and community education.

I encourage everyone to support the Niuli'i Youth Farm Project by subscribing to our youth run CSA program, by volunteering, or by donating tools or funding. For more information, contact me via e-mail at dr.dash@cox.netz or via phone at 808-896-1331.

Front Page