



## **For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Liam Kernell  
Director of Communications, The Kohala Center  
[lkernell@kohalacenter.org](mailto:lkernell@kohalacenter.org)  
808-887-6411

### **Efforts underway to improve Pelekāne Bay water quality *Watershed conservation project will reduce sediment runoff through wildfire management and rotational grazing***

WAIMEA, HAWAI‘I ISLAND, Hawai‘i—April 3, 2019—One of Hawai‘i’s most degraded watersheds is receiving some much-needed attention.

The Hawai‘i State Department of Health (DOH), through their Polluted Runoff Control Program and in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is helping restore watersheds in the state and supporting the implementation of polluted runoff control projects in key watersheds. DOH is collaborating with the State’s Department of Land and Natural Resource (DLNR) and Hawai‘i Island-based The Kohala Center to implement a rotational and targeted grazing program to support erosion control in the Pelekāne Bay watershed, in which a majority of the land is privately owned and used for cattle grazing.

The primary purpose of the two-year project is to protect and improve the quality of water resources and reduce nonpoint source pollution flowing into Pelekāne Bay in order to protect coral reefs, enhance recreational usage, and contribute to historic and cultural preservation. Program objectives include installing and repairing nearly 9,000 feet of paddock fence, dividing a 2,052-acre paddock into two sections for rotational grazing, installing watering troughs to attract cattle to desired grazing areas and away from Makeahua Stream, establishing a monitoring program to track program effectiveness, and hosting outreach and education events to keep the community informed of the project’s progress.

Preventing wildfires by reducing fuel load—flammable vegetation such as non-native fountain grass and leaf litter—is a priority for managing erosion in the watershed. Establishing a rotational, targeted cattle grazing program can help reduce fuel load in the watershed significantly.

“The Kohala Center and its stakeholders have a shared purpose of ma uka to ma kai stewardship that reconnects ‘āina and communities to strengthen all our total ecological, cultural, economic, and social well-being,” said Cheryl Ka‘uhane Lupenui, The Center’s president and CEO. “Working with landowners to implement a more formally managed grazing program and

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strategies to mitigate potential wildfires will have a significant effect on erosion control, sediment runoff, and the overall health of South Kohala’s terrestrial and marine environments.”

Located in Kohala on Hawai‘i Island, the Pelekāne Bay watershed has been a priority focus area for The Kohala Center’s conservation and restoration efforts for over a decade. Through the Kohala Watershed Partnership, The Center works with private landowners and public-sector land managers to mitigate soil erosion and reduce fire risk in the watershed by removing invasive species, planting native vegetation, installing and maintaining cattle fencing and sediment check dams, and continued implementation of an adaptive landscape-scale watershed management plan for Kohala Mountain.

### **About The Kohala Center**

Founded in the year 2000, The Kohala Center ([kohalacenter.org](http://kohalacenter.org)) is an independent, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. We turn research and ancestral knowledge into action, so that communities in Hawai‘i and around the world can thrive—ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially.

### **Disclosure**

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