



For Immediate Release

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Forest restoration and stewardship training to commence in Kawaihae ***The Kohala Center awarded an OHA Community Grant for*** ***Kohala ma uka to ma kai stewardship pilot project***

KAWAIIHAE, HAWAII ISLAND, Hawai‘i—October 17, 2019—The Kohala Center has been awarded a \$260,000 grant from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Community Grants Program to support forest restoration and stewardship training in Kohala from ma uka to ma kai.

The purpose of this two-year project is to reestablish native forest and stabilize two riparian corridors in the Honokoa watershed in the ahupua‘a of Kawaihae. Watershed restoration activities include installing and maintaining five miles of fence to protect the riparian corridors, removal of invasive weeds, and collecting seed, propagating, and outplanting native plant species. These activities will increase access to fresh water, provide habitat for native flora and fauna, and build community stewardship capacity.

In partnership with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands community of Kailapa, a stewardship program will be designed and delivered to cultivate next-generation stewards and conservationists by immersing participants in real-world watershed restoration efforts. Kilo observation, monitoring, and data collection will be gathered from revegetated areas ma uka to Honokoa Bay ma kai to assess the impacts of project activities.

Implementing a top-down planting strategy and reestablishing native forest along the stream beds can increase soil saturation, stream flow, and fog drip, and help return moisture to the currently arid landscape once again.

The Honokoa watershed is listed as one of the most degraded watersheds in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) West Hawai‘i Habitat Blueprint Focus Area due to increased land-based sedimentation and nearshore coral reef ecosystem declines, resulting from overgrazing by feral goats and domestic cattle, invasive plants, wildfire, and climate change. Through its Kohala Watershed Partnership, The Kohala Center works to mitigate soil erosion

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throughout Honokoa by installing ungulate-proof fencing, removing feral goats, installing sediment check dams, and planting native plant species.

“Mahalo to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for supporting our community’s efforts to implement ahupua’a-based mālama ‘āina,” said Cheryl Ka’uhane Lupenui, The Kohala Center’s president and chief executive officer. “By reconnecting with the land and engaging as aloha ‘āina practitioners, we follow in the footsteps of our kūpuna who had an intimate understanding of the relationships and interconnected functions of our natural systems from ma uka to ma kai.”

For more information on the program or to participate, visit kohalacenter.org, facebook.com/TheKohalaCenter, and twitter.com/KohalaCenter.

About The Kohala Center

The Kohala Center (TKC) was founded in 2000 with a mission to respectfully engage the Island of Hawaii as a model of and for the world. At the center of our work is Kohala, where we cultivate deep-rooted relationships to (re)connect our food, water, place, and people. From here, we extend our practices in the fields of conservation, education, economic development, and leadership across Hawai‘i. By turning ancestral knowledge and research into action, we envision a state of pono (prosperity, excellence, well-being) in which Hawai‘i’s ecosystems are thriving ecologically, culturally, economically, and socially.

About OHA’s Community Grants Program

OHA’s Community Grants Program supports non-profit organizations whose projects and programs serve the Native Hawaiian community and align with OHA’s Strategic Results. For more information about the Community Grants Program, please visit oha.org/grants.

About the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Established by the state Constitutional Convention in 1978, OHA is a semi-autonomous state agency mandated to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. Guided by a board of nine publicly elected trustees, OHA fulfills its mandate through advocacy, research, community engagement, land management and the funding of community programs. Learn more at oha.org.