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Aloha Mr. Sato,

The Calling

I feel the mana emerging from the  
heiau, the sacred place  
I hear the mo'olelo of my ancestors  
calling to me like a mother speaking to her child  
I smell the light stench of the marsh  
I taste the sweetness of the sugar cane  
I ate earlier, it was a sweet day in one bite...  
I taste the freshness of nature  
I feel joy knowing that people are restoring  
a part of Hawaiian history  
I know now it's time to begin.

— [name redacted] Kailua Intermediate School, Oct. 1, 2017

The poem above was written by a Kailua Intermediate School 8th grader after a four-hour session of ceremonial eating, lo'i clearing, kalo learning, and mo'olelo sharing on the grounds of Ulupō Heiau under the direction of Hika'alani staff members Kaleo Wong, Maya Saffery, and Ryan Ueunten.

Our poet and his classmates walked to Ulupō and back from their KIS campus (and did not, therefore, contribute to the Kukanono traffic and parking issues). They are part of an ongoing walk-and-learn relationship that we have “developed” with this school and that is becoming part of its STE(A)M curriculum.

The poem speaks to what we’ve been doing at Kawainui for the last three years and of what we plan to be doing there for years, for generations, to come. As Kaleo is fond of saying, of all that we endeavor at Ulupō, the most important is growing kids to become the aloha ‘āina stewards of this land; kids who come to the personal realization that “now it’s time to begin.”

This is the kind of development that we advocate; it has nothing to do with a tourist invasion, nothing to do with commercialization, disruption, elitism, degradation of environment, or any of the other accusations that have been leveled at us by critics of the Master Plan – critics who, to the best of our knowledge, have never visited us at Ulupō to experience, first hand, the work of restoration, reclamation, and revitalization that has occurred there during our brief tenure.

No ia mea he aloha ‘āina (for this reason, for this love of that which feeds us) the board of directors of Hika‘alani would like to express its ongoing and unanimous support for the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan Project DEIS as released in December 2017.

We are a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of land, culture, and identity at Kawainui. We are educators, scholars, and practitioners of Hawaiian culture with deep-rooted ties to our Kailua home. As such, we are especially appreciative of the plan’s continued, cool-headed recognition of the critical role that a permanent Hawaiian cultural presence must play in the stewardship of Kawainui if it is to become, again, the thriving, life-giving piko of our ahupua‘a.

The Kawainui DEIS identifies the Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club (KHCC) and ‘Ahahahui Mālama i ka Lōkahi (AML) as the curators of Ulupō. In fact, Hika‘alani has taken-on that volunteer agreement with the State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks as of December 20, 2017.

This was done in compliance with a directive from the State Attorney General who ruled against co-curatorships; it was done, as well, with the support of KHCC and AML and with the understanding that we are all partner organizations that will continue to work together and kāko‘o each other because of our shared vision and love for Kawainui.

We offer below a list of the groups we've worked with this year:

- Schools: Kailua Intermediate School, Trinity Christian School, Kalāheo High School, Ka'ōhao Charter School, Hui Mālama o ke Kai Charter School, Kamehameha Schools, Punahou School, 'Iolani, Semester at Sea, Windward Community College, University of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Pacific University
- Youth Groups: Kailua Mustangs, Windward YMCA, Boy Scouts of America
- Community & Cultural groups: Kailua Hawaiian Civic Club, Ka Lei Papahi o Kakuhihewa, Hālau Mōhala 'Ilima, Board and Stone in Every Home, Pacific American Foundation, Paepae o He'eia, Hale Kealoha 'Ai Pono, Hui Mālama i ke Ala 'Ūlili, Ho'okua'āina, Kailua Canoe Club, and Mālama Honua Huaka'i.
- Women's Community Correctional Center
- Restoration specialist groups Kupu, NALU, and Dawson.
- First Nations' Futures Program: Papa Mau cohort

A more thorough documentation of our work can be found on the Hika'alani facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/hikaalani96734/timeline>) and Hika'alani website (<http://hikaalani.website/index.html>). We offer these links and the summary above in order to provide evidence of Ulupō as a successful model for the Hawaiian cultural presence that we envision for all of Kawainui. In essence, we see Kawainui itself as an again-thriving fishpond and food-provider around which are clustered marae of specific, specialized purpose.

*Marae*, as we understand it, refers to a sacred enclosure that consists of an open, ceremonial space (marae ākea) and a cluster of hale that serves the cultural needs of the kānaka honua (native people) of that place. The largest hale at a marae is meant to gather its people in the embrace of their ancestors; it is, in fact, a physical manifestation of those ancestors. The smaller, auxiliary spaces (sometimes attached to the hale nui, sometimes free-standing) include cooking, instructional, caretaker, and restroom facilities. Often, but not always – a marae is also home to a pā ilina or urupā, a burial ground.

A marae, as we understand it, is defined by place and presence. A marae is a place designed by its people to bind its people to who they are. It is a place of refuge, continuity, and regeneration for these people. It is a place where they are most uncompromisingly present. Their marae is central to their cultural identity, especially when their identity is threatened by those who would discredit and marginalize them. It cannot be a marae if it is defined for them by others. Nor can it be a marae if its use is regulated for them by others.

*Marae* is a Maori word. Its specific Hawaiian language equivalent is *mala*e (a cleared space), but its more accurate connotative equivalents include *pu‘uhonua* (place of refuge), *kīpuka* (oasis of continuity in a landscape of change), and *piko* (center, nexus, connection point). We envision each of the proposed Hawaiian educating/sharing/practicing centers at Kawainui – the gathering place below the transfer station, the canoe facility below Kalāheo School, the center for performance and literary excellence at Wai‘auia, and the garden-temple at Ulupō – as marae, pu‘uhonua, kīpuka, and piko, each with its own cluster of hard and soft spaces, each facing and serving the largest and most inspiring of our marae ākea: Kawainui itself. Together these places of regeneration embrace us, and we them, and allow for the fullest expression and transmission of who we are.

The Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan Project DEIS of December 2017 – though not a complete expression of our desire for a permanent and thriving Hawaiian cultural presence at Kawainui – was produced with Hawaiian community input, does accommodate our vision of a “permanent, thriving presence,” does credit us with leadership and integrity, and definitely gives us the opportunity to pursue our vision in our own generation. For this we are most grateful.

‘O au nō me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Tanya Pi‘ilani Alston

Hika‘alani Board of Directors 2018

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