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Support of Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan

This letter restates my support of the Kawainui-Hāmākua Master Plan.

I have read the Project Update and Summary of Draft Master Plan Comments and appreciate the thoroughness and responsiveness entailed in attending to each comment.

I work with Hika‘alani, the nonprofit organization that currently holds the volunteer agreement with the Division of State Parks for Ulupō Heiau. While I was somewhat disappointed that the simple facilities and improvements previously proposed at Ulupō have been removed from the plan, I understand the action in light of unresolved property and access questions, and I wholeheartedly support the restoration of stewardship for Kawainui-Hāmākua wherever possible.

My family has made its home in Kailua since 1945. I was born, raised, and lived most of my life here. As a Kailua native, Kawainui has been a grounding aspect of my identity. My concept of Kawainui has evolved from the neglected ‘swamp’ and junk yard of the 1950s and ‘60s, to the healthier, yet still not-for-people “marsh” in the ‘70s and ‘80s, to my current understanding of the history of Kawainui as a fishpond and abundant source of food for the Ko‘olau population, and a place that needs our continued attention.

By my reading of the plan, the centers for stewardship at the edges of Kawainui make up less than 10% of its entire acreage, and simply overlay areas of original Hawaiian settlements. I find the proposed uses for each area are fitting for community programs and cultural practice.

The plan reflects my hope for a thriving Kawainui. I understand opponents are motivated by a fear of what ‘bad things’ might happen; I prefer to believe that thoughtful and culturally sensitive planning of initiatives will ensure a revitalized relationship between the people of Kailua and the land at Kawainui and Hāmākua.

I am not worried that once-restored these places would fall to neglect or abuse. I think of my Hawaiian children and grandchildren when I say we have current and future generations who will take on the kuleana of aloha ‘āina.

My recommendation is continued collaboration with the ‘āina restoration and cultural education community groups of Kailua that understand the value of the natural and cultural resources at Kawainui and Hāmākua.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

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