

# Coastalviews

A Quarterly Publication of the **MAUI COASTAL LAND TRUST**

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## Partnerships Key in Growing Plants & People at the Waihe'e Refuge

When the Maui Coastal Land Trust officially began its work on the land at the Waihe'e Refuge on June 30, 2004, we dreamed of returning this special place to its roots – literally – back to a pristine island landscape. We knew of the vast potential of this process to teach and learn, but we couldn't quite picture how much we could accomplish...in what time frame...and with how many helping hands.

Now as we enter our fourth year of restoration efforts at the Waihe'e Refuge, we pause to take measure of our efforts. Not only do we tally almost 60 acres cleared of invasive plant species, we realize the priceless partnerships that have developed. Most importantly, we see the ability of this land to foster the next generation to care for our islands' precious cultural treasures, fragile habitat and native species.

Each year, hundreds of students of all ages now use the Refuge as a place of learning – from Wailuku Union Preschool to Kaunoa Senior Center and all ages in between. Surprisingly, this summer is busier than the regular school year as seasonal program providers come to Waihe'e for cultural outreach and environmental education. A myriad of groups continue to come out each week to see and learn more of the area's ancient fishing village, clear invasive plant species, collect shoreline trash and pot & plant native seedlings.

The key to MCLT's ability to host these groups is the support of granting agencies which largely fund our Waihe'e staff and equipment needs. We must recognize: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Private Stewardship Partnership, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service- Wetlands Reserve Program, U.S. Forest Service, Maui Electric Company, A & B Properties / A & B Foundation, Atherton Foundation, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Hawaii State Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

As with all our projects at MCLT, the Waihe'e Refuge is ripe with potential and we must continue to grow the organization to meet the increasing demands of the community. We continue with our dream of a comprehensive cultural and education center at the Refuge – always mindful to balance protection of the land and our need to educate the upcoming generation of their future stewardship responsibilities.



*photo by: Ron Chapple*

# Currents



GIL KEITH-AGARAN  
President, Maui Coastal Land Trust

## President's Message

In May, \$4.7 million in funding from the Legacy Land Conservation Fund was allocated to preserve almost \$20 million in property throughout the islands, including MCLT's 128 acre Nu'u acquisition from Kaupo Ranch. Buying Nu'u Landing the area protects significant coastal, wetland, cultural and wildlife habitat and increases MCLT's footprint in East Maui.

A big challenge facing MCLT – both board members and all of our friends and supporters – is to keep up with opportunities to identify and preserve the best undeveloped landscapes remaining in Maui Nui. We've happily become a "victim of our success", but the rapidly increasing opportunities mean we need to grow our resources to be able to respond. While we have been very successful in attracting funding to purchase prime lands like Waihe'e and Nu'u, and we're fortunate to have great support of our on-the-ground restoration activities, we need to increase our organizational capacity.

Additional staff, a larger office and more operational support funds from the Maui community are essential to meeting the conservation goals. It's a daunting challenge but well worth it when you experience the open spaces that will continue to make Maui Nui a unique and wondrous place to live.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Gil Keith-Agaran

**It's summer at Waihe'e Refuge** - That means a new crop of interns joining us. When interviewing with MCLT Project Manager Scott Fisher, our 2008 summer crew was not deterred when warned of the hot, tough working conditions at the Waihe'e Refuge. Our band of three from the Americorp program is sweating it out with Scott and Waihe'e Land Steward James Crowe eradicating invasive plant species out towards Waihe'e Point. You will also find them conducting daily shoreline inspections checking for turtle nests and assisting with the multitude of summer kids programs visiting the refuge every week.



We welcome the extra helping hands from Maui girls: Sarah Foronda (left) who is in her second year at Hawaii Pacific University studying Justice Administration (with plans for law school), Alexa Fell (right rear) who will be spending her senior high school year studying in Denmark, and Renona Pires (right front) who will attend Maui Community College this fall after graduating from King Kekaulike earlier this year.

## Making an impact on the land and in our hearts

- The Dell Corporation treated 150 top employees from around the U.S. to a Maui vacation last May. One of their first activities was a service day at the Waihe'e Refuge. Four hardworking Dell teams cleared a huge swath of invasive pluchea at Waihe'e Point, collected shoreline trash, potted native seedlings and cleared overgrowth above St. Anne's Cemetery. MCLT is grateful not only for the hard work, but the appreciation many Dell employees expressed for experiencing such a special place.



photo by: Brian Maengot



**The Amazing 'Auwai** – We've seen it marked on archeological maps. Now, as our clearing efforts at the Waihe'e Refuge creep closer to the northern Waihe'e Point, the ancient 'auwai or water aqueduct can now be seen along the foot of the dune. Though it looks more like a rocky trail today, the 'auwai remains an engineering marvel built by the Hawaiians to convey water from the Waihe'e river around the foot of the dunes to the inland fishpond and taro lo'i at Kapoho Village. Kapoho was a thriving fishing village in the area. Carbon dating at the site dates habitation to at least 1464.



# Musings from the Shoreline....

DALE BONAR *Exec. Director*

When we agree to accept a “perpetual” easement or acquire lands in fee that we tell you, our supporters, will be protected “in perpetuity”, we are making a bold promise. On one hand, the IRS has set this “perpetuity” requirement for deductibility of donations, and our charter mandates we protect the lands forever. In reality, since future socio-political-economic conditions are largely out of our control, the best we can do is pledge that we will do whatever

the law allows to assure permanent protection.

From a practical and planning standpoint, maximizing the ability of the Land Trust to ensure “perpetuity” requires a strong, sustainable, professional organization with the resources to weather lean times and to adequately monitor and enforce easements.

The necessary financial resources are obvious ones, however there are others of equal importance. One critically important resource is the many volunteers and collaborators in our work, and the ones I am most thrilled about are the kids. I am certainly not perpetual, so one of the best things I can do is encourage the young generations to get their hands dirty and

develop that love of the land we all share. Permanence from a societal sense means that conservation ethic has to become ingrained in public consciousness. As shown in our lead article here, we are seeing a great swell of interest and pride in volunteers adopting that ethic.

Given that most land trusts are relatively small, young organizations, I am sometimes struck at our “arrogance” in promoting perpetual protection, however that is exactly what we strive for. Over the next few months we will be announcing a number of new easements and land acquisitions, as well as the organizational strengthening we are taking on to be sure those protections are indeed “perpetual”.

On Maui’s north shore at the Ke’anae peninsula, the 6.5 acre Kepler family farm will forever be held in a conservation easement protecting the prolific and historic taro cultivation on the land.

The area has been cultivated in taro for centuries in a complex gravity-fed irrigation system which still maintains its original integrity. The active Kepler farm contains 35 lo’i (taro patch), 12 of which are presently in production. A small undistinguished lo’i on the property bears the name Ke’anae from which the entire locality took its name. This lo’i was considered sacred and its taro was reserved for the ruling chief.

The purchase of this conservation easement by MCLT extinguishes all future development rights on the land and was funded by specified grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm & Ranchland Protection Program (\$350,000) and the County of Maui Open Space Fund (\$350,000).

## Forever in Taro - Historic Ke’anae Farm Protected



*Protection of the health and integrity of these centuries-old taro lo’i is the main goal of MCLT’s latest conservation easement.*



2007-2008 Fiscal Year  
Giving Report Inside!

**Our Mission:** To preserve & protect the coastal lands of Maui Nui for the benefit of the natural environment and of current and future generations.



**MAUI COASTAL LAND TRUST**

P.O. Box 965, Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793



## Waihe'e Refuge Annual Picnic

Saturday, August 23, 2008

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please join us for fun, food and fellowship. The BBQ will be going for a great buffet lunch and tours will be conducted of MCLT's restoration areas at the Waihe'e Refuge.

Please call 244-5263 for directions and reservations by Friday, August 15th.

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