

Molokai

Climate Change Collaboration Lessons Learned

A'ōhe hana nui ke alu 'ia.

No task is too great when done together.

‘Ōlelo Wehe

Who We Are: For the past decade, our grassroots nonprofit called Ka Honua Momona (KHM) has been caring for two ancient loko i‘a, traditional fishponds, located in the ahupua‘a of Kamiloloa and Makakupaia just a few minutes east of Molokai’s main town, Kaunakakai. The work has entailed a great deal of effort: removing invasive mangroves and marine algae, rebuilding kuapā (fishpond walls), repairing mākāhā (sluice gates), and restocking native fish species in the ponds. Through the years we’ve cleared shoreline areas that act as habitat for native water birds; opened up fresh water springs; reestablished and maintained mangrove-free zones; and restored a greater degree of function to both Ali‘i and Kaloko‘eli fishponds—all without the aid of heavy machinery.

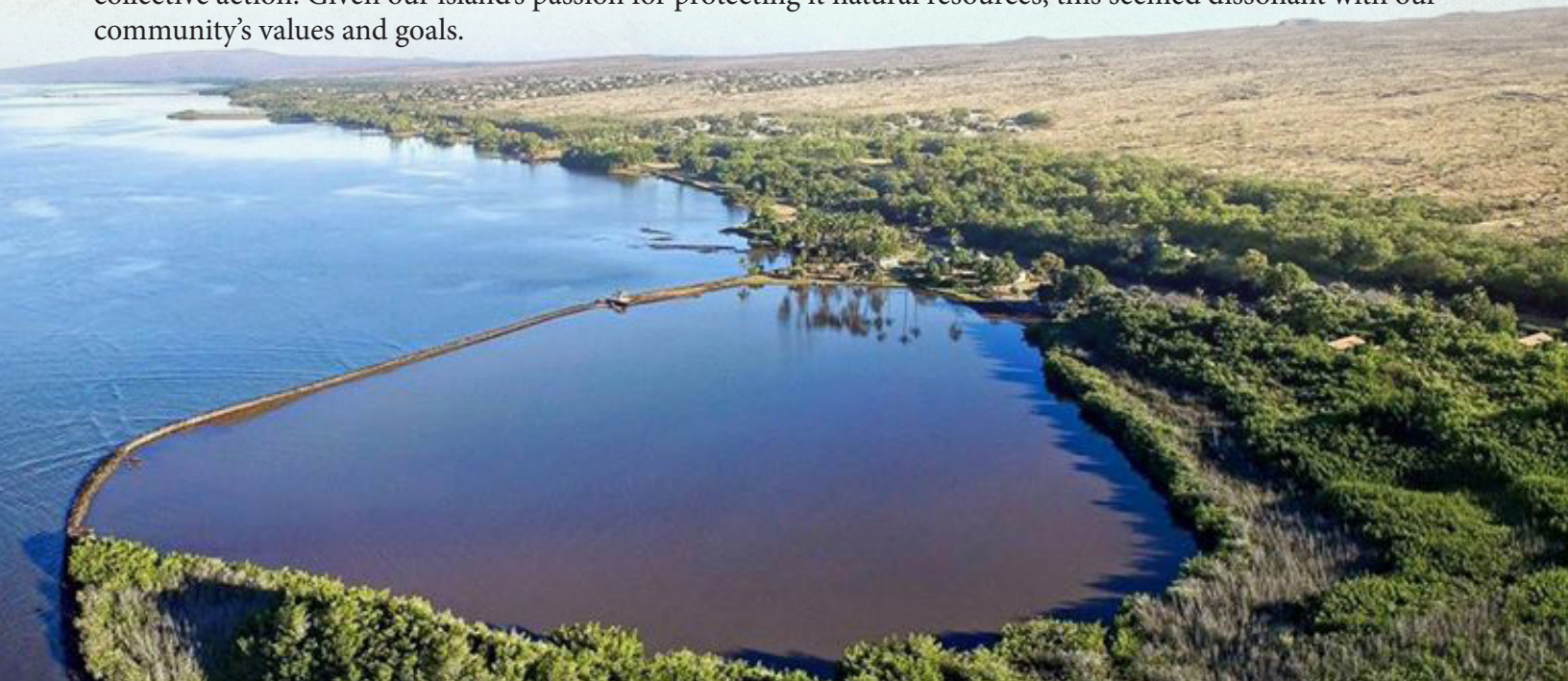
These accomplishments represent an immense amount of man-hours powered by thousands of school kids, community volunteers, and visitors that have joined us in our stewardship efforts. Together we are restoring momona (abundance) to these natural and cultural treasures. Muddy banks are slowly becoming sandy, sedimentation levels are dropping, water quality is improving, prized Hawaiian mullet are spawning and flourishing once again within the fishpond walls.

The Need: Over time Ka Honua Momona’s kūpuna (elders), cultural practitioners, and leadership began to recognize changes in the natural world that seemed to be out of sync with normal patterns. The texture of ‘ele‘ele, a native limu, was more soft and slimy than usual. The highest tides of the year, washed above the top of our kuapā, exceeding levels from the previous years KHM had been caring for the ponds. The behavior patterns of certain marine species, and conditions in general, seemed to be more variable and unpredictable.

As we began to talk with others, it appeared that we were not alone in our observations and questions. Furthermore, local, national, and global dialogue was increasingly turning to the cumulative impacts of carbon emissions, global warming, rising sea levels, and other large-scale environmental changes. This myriad of phenomena, collectively termed “climate change,” was emerging amidst global consciousness as the greatest threat ever faced by human kind.

Were any of the things we were observing at Ali‘i or Kaloko‘eli fishponds attributable to climate change? Were these unusual characteristics or patterns to become the new normal? What could we expect moving forward? How should we prepare for the future of these fishponds?

At this point we realized we had questions and no answers. Furthermore, the people who we would normally turn to for answers, our kūpuna and practitioners, also had only questions. Climate change dialogue was for the most part not occurring on Molokai, that is to say, there was no deliberate process that collectively engaged natural resource managers, and community members in any meaningful way—one that might lead to collective action. Given our island’s passion for protecting its natural resources, this seemed dissonant with our community’s values and goals.



Molokai Climate Change Collaboration

Hānau He Mana’o

An Idea Is Born

Ultimately, this gap in our own understanding of climate change issues led to the creation of the Molokai Climate Change Collaboration. The project, supported by the Pacific Islands Climate Change Cooperative, had several interrelated components that endeavored to: build relationships between Hawaii’s leading climate scientists and Molokai’s natural resource managers; provide KHM with a greater understanding of the impacts (current and future) of climate change on our loko i’a; and act as a catalyst for community-wide dialogue and action.

Through a series of workshops, focus group meetings, the

formation of a grassroots climate change task force, the production of a landscape change video featuring Molokai kūpuna, and a community-wide meeting, we have been able to successfully realize the initial goals of the project, while also identifying community goals we will continue to work toward.

Hānau Ke Kumu

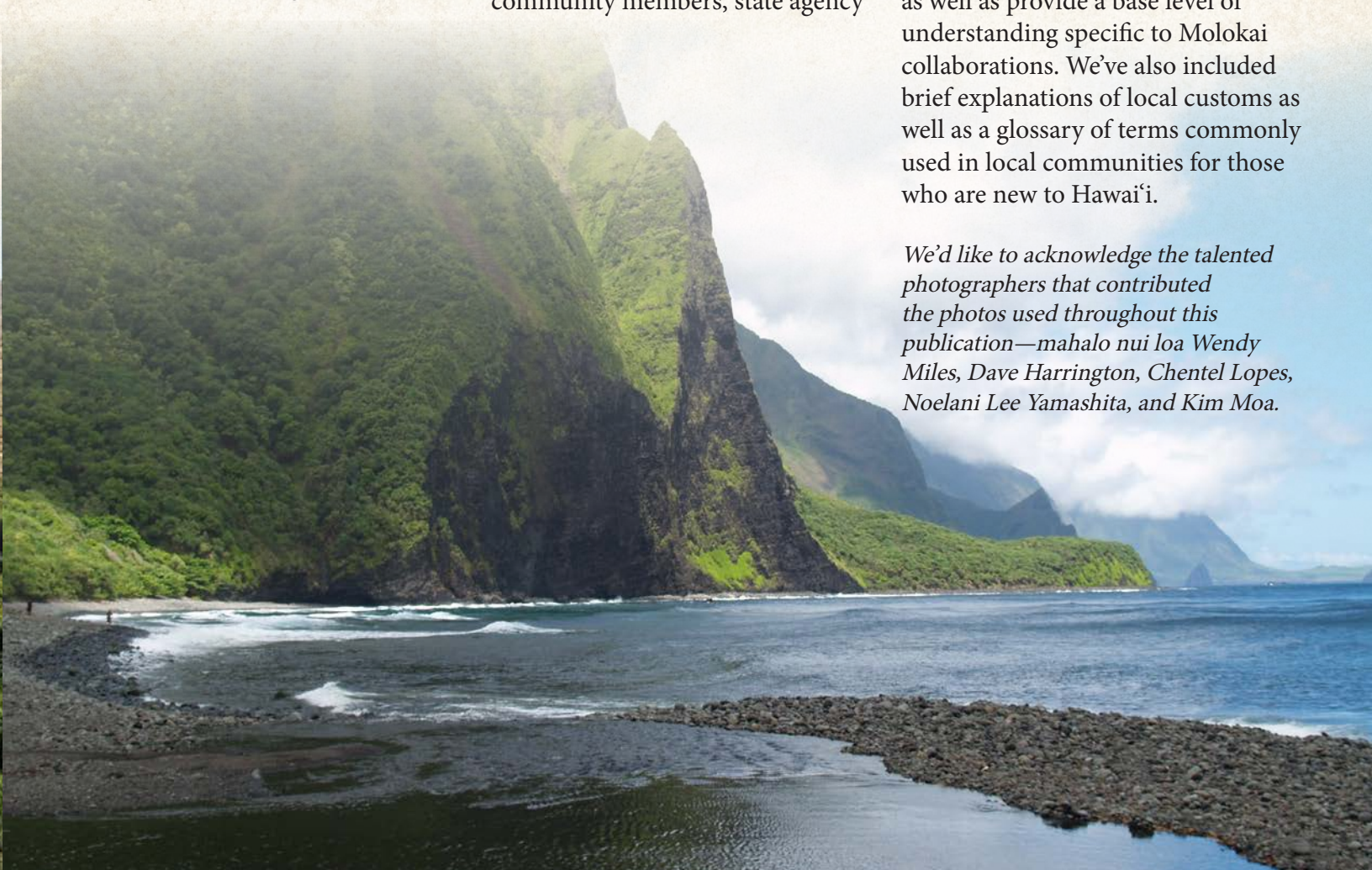
Purpose of This Document

One of the key benefits we’ve realized through this project was the strengthening of relationships between a diverse group of people that share the common goal of protecting Hawai’i’s environment and people. This group has included resource managers, cultural practitioners, kūpuna, scientists, community members, state agency

employees, and funders. These relationships continue to remain critical to our ability to navigate Ka Honua Momona’s, and Molokai’s, future.

It is our hope that other rural island communities throughout Hawai’i and the Pacific might experience successful collaborations of this nature to better protect the inheritance of future generations. Indeed, the unprecedented challenges before us posed by climate change, demand a joint approach that brings into service the highest and best of both traditional knowledge and modern science. This document has been created to share some of the lessons we’ve learned in implementing the Molokai Climate Change Collaboration Project, as well as provide a base level of understanding specific to Molokai collaborations. We’ve also included brief explanations of local customs as well as a glossary of terms commonly used in local communities for those who are new to Hawai’i.

We’d like to acknowledge the talented photographers that contributed the photos used throughout this publication—mahalo nui loa Wendy Miles, Dave Harrington, Chentel Lopes, Noelani Lee Yamashita, and Kim Moa.



He Alo A He Alo

Oli Komo No Ka Honua Momona

*Pā aheahe mai ka 'olukai i ka holunape o ka lau o ka niu
Noho mālie ka 'āina
Eia ka honua momona pili me ke one ali'i
Pō'ai 'ia e ke aloha
E komo mai i loko o ka hale no ke aloha pumehana
E komo mai nei ma loko, e komo mai me ke aloha ē...*

Kāhea a Komo

*Defining the Roles of
Visitor & Host*

When groups come to work at the fishponds they are expected to participate in cultural protocol that begins with an oli kāhea, a chant introducing the group and requesting permission to enter. If the group does not have an oli kāhea, a simple elongated “hui” or explanation of their intentions, if rendered sincerely, will suffice. Our staff, kūpuna and interns await under Hale Momona, a traditional thatched classroom without walls, to offer our oli komo, or welcoming chant, if the group is mākaukau—ready to enter the space and join in

the work. Often, a light breeze, or sunbeam, or the gentle swaying of coconut fronds, will join with us to welcome in our visitors.

This protocol is not unique to Molokai, or even to Hawai'i, and is indeed commonly found throughout Polynesia in many variations. The practice of oli kāhea embodies a fundamental understanding that when we travel to someone else's domain we go with good intentions, respect, deference to our host, and aloha. On the receiving end, hosts are measured by the warmth of their welcome and hospitality, as well as their care and attention to their visitors' needs.

Pō'ai 'Ia E Ke Aloha

Forging Collaborative Circles

When bringing together our group of participants for the Molokai Climate Change Collaboration, we were very intentional about creating both a physical and social environment that reflected the values and dynamic of a circle. Although participants came from very diverse backgrounds, we were joined in a single purpose—to support Ka Honua Momona and Molokai. Professional titles, academic degrees, personal accomplishments, and any other distinguishing attributes were insignificant, eclipsed by our shared aloha for Hawai'i and the immense

Aloha Kekahi I Kekahi...





task at hand. Similar to the ‘aha which braids together eight single aho to form an unbreakable cord, each person’s expertise, knowledge, and experience was honored and appreciated.

Just as important as the formal facilitated sessions, were the informal times before, during, or after the workshops. Some of the invited scientists brought their families and extended their stay, forging even deeper ties to the community. Professional relationships were fortified by personal ties as children played with one another and families spent time together. For small Hawaiian communities, like Molokai, that possess an intricate web of familial and community ties, professional relationships almost always include a personal connection. This ‘ohana-style of working and being together contributes to the overall fabric of our community and makes Molokai a beautiful place to grow up, work, and live.

Meheu Ka’i O Ka Hulumamo *Honoring “Knew” Knowledge*

Although the information and science of climate change was unfamiliar territory for many in our community, it was critical to begin with what is second nature for most residents—aloha ‘āina. Our collective kinship with the land, intimate awareness of the status of our natural resources, subsistence lifestyles, and passionate commitment to caring for Moloka’i,

form a strong foundation for responding to climate change. In other words, although the dialogue about how climate change will impact Molokai is new, protecting and caring for this island and her people, against a long list of threats, has been an ongoing community effort. Climate change is the latest and greatest threat to our beloved home, and Molokai’s people—never wavering from our duty to mālama ‘āina—are well positioned to respond.

Therefore, the dialogue about climate change is essentially a dialogue about aloha ‘āina and mālama ‘āina—how we as stewards, can continue to care for, and protect our lani, ‘āina, and kai, and all those that dwell within these realms. By ensuring the center of our conversation is the land itself, we tap into the deep connection and sense of responsibility Molokai’s people have for ‘āina. The depth of this connection is felt within

the na’au—our “gut” or intuitive center— that, paired with our intellect, helps us determine a pono response to any given situation. Indeed, the most meaningful dialogues will help to uncover the intuitive wisdom within a group.

Mālama Makakupaia *Embracing Meaningful Frameworks*

In addition to placing the conversation within the context of aloha ‘āina, it was important to also create a framework that was meaningful to Molokai’s people. For our workshops, this meant that everything was viewed through the lens of the ahupua’a. Rather than creating sessions or groups in accordance with climate change issues such as sea level rise, ocean acidification, weather changes, etc., we focused on uka (upper watershed), kula (lower watershed), kahakai (coast), and kai (ocean). Historical information, changes to



the landscape over time, current issues, restoration efforts, and potential climate change impacts were discussed for each of these areas. Further focus was dedicated to the ahupua'a in which the workshops took place, (Makakupaia), while our outdoor setting—under a traditional hale—meant that we were visually connected to the land. As much as possible, we tried to serve meals that utilized food grown within the area. These small details may seem subtle, but we believe they incorporate the place into the discussion and further reinforce the 'āina-kānaka connection.

Many of the visiting scientists remarked on how different this experience was from other climate change meetings, workshops, or forums they had participated in. They also seemed to enjoy it! We appreciated their wholehearted participation and willingness to engage in ways that were most appropriate for our community.

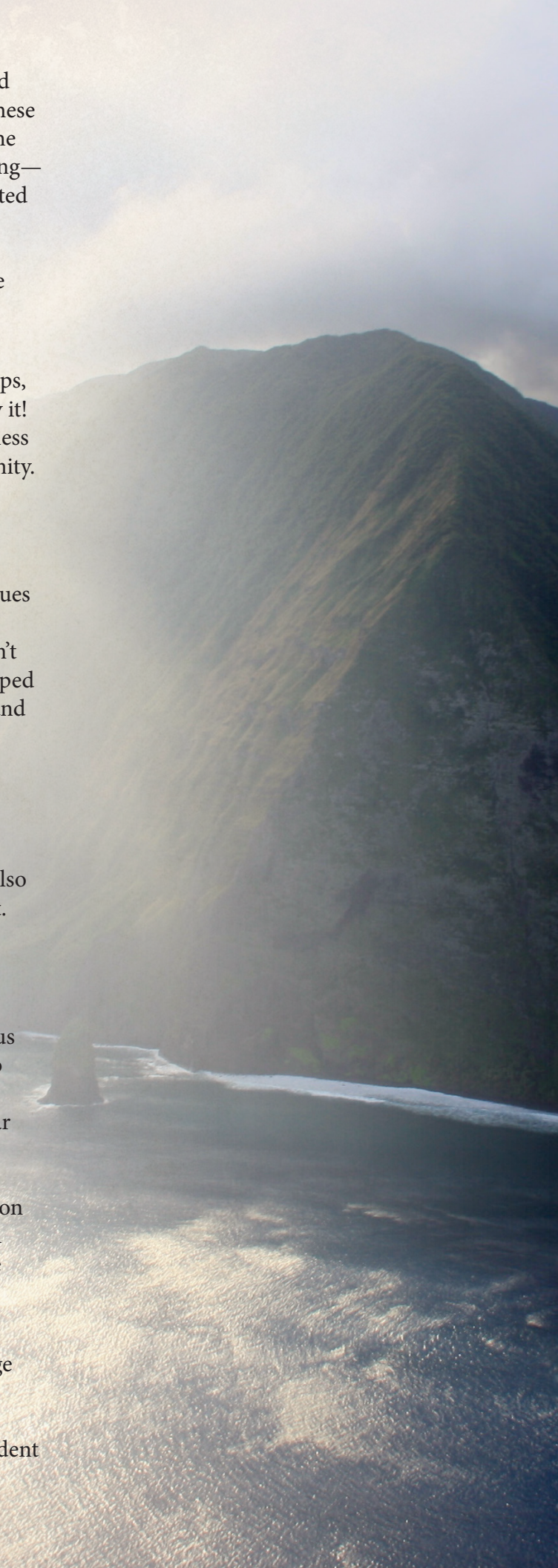
E Hopu Ka Lima I Ka Hoe a Hoes!

Igniting Collective Will & Action

Finally, with our growing awareness of the enormity of the issues that can and will arise from climate change, we have realized the need for sustained collaborative effort. Although we weren't totally sure of the direction the project would take, we had hoped initially that it might act as a catalyst for continued dialogue and eventual wide-spread collective action. After our workshops, a small group of dedicated individuals formed a grassroots task force that committed to facilitate the continuation of the group's work. Through the efforts of the task force, Molokai's largest annual community event, Earth Day 2017, will have a climate change theme. A myriad of smaller collaborations is also underway as a result of relationships built through the project.

One key barrier that we have faced in focusing our collective efforts is the overwhelming workload that each task member carries. It is likely that those with the leadership ability and capacity to participate on a volunteer task force have numerous other obligations. Resource managers, many of whom need to simultaneously raise funds for their conservation efforts, are also often overburdened with work. However, there was a clear understanding among our core team that this was immensely important and that our ongoing work needed to be sustained. We simultaneously acknowledged that our current conservation efforts were critical to ensuring that Molokai's ecosystems will be in the best possible condition to respond to climate change impacts.

We will continue to work toward igniting the collective will and action of Molokai's residents in response to climate change by bringing together diverse circles of people, embedding our work within the cultural context of aloha 'āina, utilizing meaningful frameworks, and providing opportunities for resident engagement.



Molokai Community Collaborations

Palena 'Ole Ke Aloha

Molokai's Land & People

The following section provides some cultural and historical background about Molokai and highlights community dynamics and expectations. It is our hope that this information might prove helpful to those outside of Molokai who hope to engage with our community for the benefit of the land and future generations. This document has been composed by the leadership of Ka Honua Momona and represents our best understanding of our community.

A larger community engagement protocol is currently being created by key environmental and cultural leaders from Molokai. It will eventually be vetted through a community process and added to the community's vision for its future captured in the document "Molokai: Future of a Hawaiian Island."

Molokai Nui A Hina

A Sense of Place

If the Hawaiian islands are viewed as a single body, Molokai is the piko, the navel, or center. Indeed this small, rural Hawaiian island was once the training grounds of kahuna, experts in every discipline, from throughout Ka Pae 'Āina o

Hawai'i. Today, Molokai remains a focal point for the retention of rural landscapes and natural resources, subsistence lifestyles and community values, as well as traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

Molokai has many ancient names that speak of its rich historical legacy while simultaneously



illuminating its present-day potential. Molokai Nui a Hina speaks of this island as the great child of mother Hina. An older name references Moloka'i as Hina's womb, while ancient chants tell of the windstorms of Hina that protect her beloved child, Molokai.

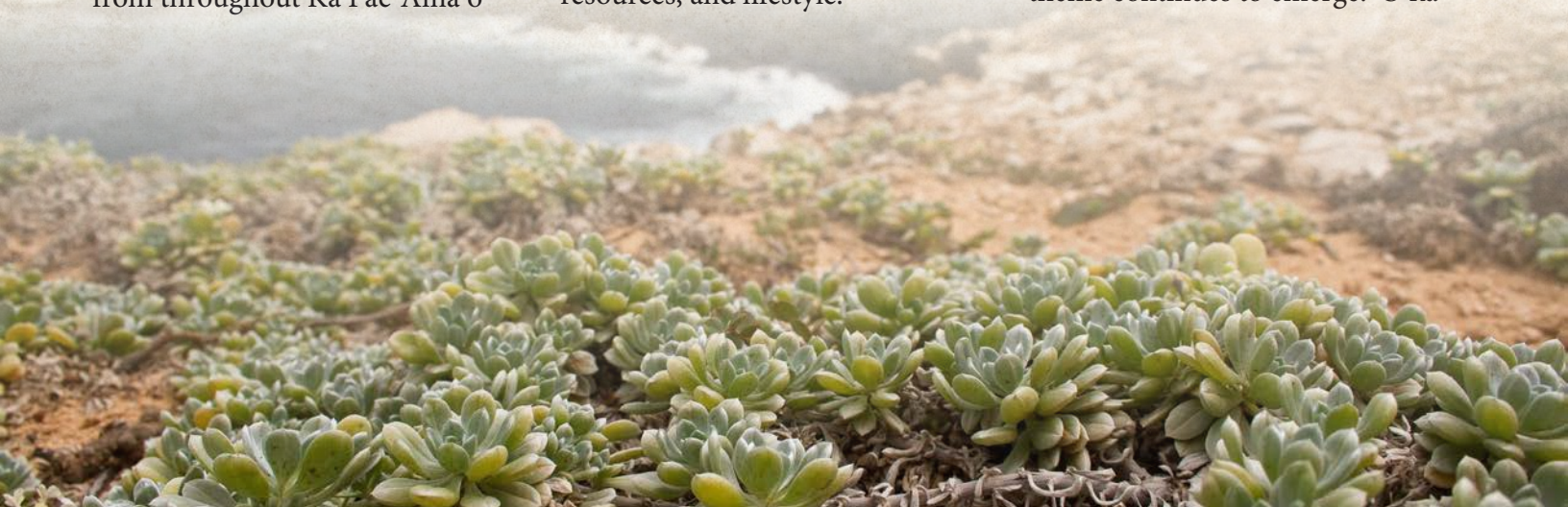
To speak of an island as being a child in the womb is to invoke strong feelings of kinship and responsibility. This understanding has been clearly evident in the people of Molokai who remain fiercely protective of their island, resources, and lifestyle.

Molokai Pule O'o tells of a place where prayers are so potent that they ripen and bear fruit in the physical realm. This name has its origins in the powerful kahuna of Molokai who once defeated a vast army by prayer alone.

Molokai 'Āina Momona reveals a land of bounty where loko i'a, or traditional fishponds, lo'i kalo, and fishing grounds produced an abundance of food—enough to share with visitors and neighboring islands. Long after other islands had adopted the ali'i system, Molokai retained a unique form of place-based governance by councils of experts known as the 'aha kiole that further promoted momona, or abundance.

The contemporary saying, Molokai No Ka Heke—a rejoinder to Maui No Ka Oi (Maui is the best)—simply means Molokai is better than the best. Surely those who are fortunate to have ties to this island, or call Molokai home, have a strong sense of pride and aloha for this unique place.

These names might be said to define Molokai's characteristics, which also surface repeatedly in mo'olelo, or traditional stories. When listening to mo'olelo of this place, a central theme continues to emerge: 'O ka



‘āina nō i hō‘ike ‘ia ka pono o ka po‘e. It is the land that reveals the goodness of its people. When the people are pono, the land flourishes. This sacred relationship between kānaka and ‘āina inextricably weaves together the well-being and destinies of human kind and the natural world.

Molokai No Ka Heke

Molokai's Legacy

The Molokai community has a long history of aloha ‘āina and mālama ‘āina as evident by numerous resistance movements over the past four decades. The passionate dedication of community leaders and residents to protect their island's precious resources and unique lifestyles has resulted in a place that has been largely untouched by development. Countless communities throughout Hawai‘i have rapidly changed—rural areas have become urbanized, the composition of residents, once mostly all local families, has shifted as more and more people without

existing ties to the land move into an area. Our tourism-driven economy has fostered an annual influx of visitors that can quickly overwhelm the few remaining pockets of rural Hawai‘i.

As Hawai‘i's landscapes rapidly change over time, it has become even more important for rural Hawaiian communities, like Molokai, to ‘onipa‘a—hold fast to our island's natural beauty, abundant resources, cultural heritage, community values, and subsistence lifestyles. In some ways our community can be defined by what it lacks—there are no big box stores, fast food restaurants, buildings over two stories high, traffic lights (certainly not necessary with no traffic), big tour buses, cruise ships, or hotels.

We often joke with visitors that if they blink as we pass by Kaunakakai Town they might miss it. Our “urban center” is comprised of two grocery stores, a handful of eateries, two gas stations, three banks, a gym, a pool, a civic center, a library,

several churches, a drug store, a post office, health care facilities, and a few small businesses. Visitors often elect to stay at Hotel Molokai, or Molokai Shores, if there is a room available as both have very limited capacity.

With just over 7,000 residents, for the most part everyone knows everyone and is interconnected through an intricate web of familial and community relationships. The majority of Molokai's residents are Native Hawaiians, and most families have generational ties to the island. Unlike other islands, whenever you use the phrase “Molokai community,” it means only one thing—the entire island population.

Although dubbed “The Friendly Isle,” the exact opposite can be true if visitors or outsiders come with ill intentions or with a plan that somehow threatens Molokai's resources and lifestyles. Countless battles throughout the years have pitted Molokai's people against developers or businesses, and economic gain against environmental conservation. Invariably, the Molokai community has elected to protect the ‘āina and the rights of future generations.



*Molokai No
Ka Heke*

Ke Ala Pono

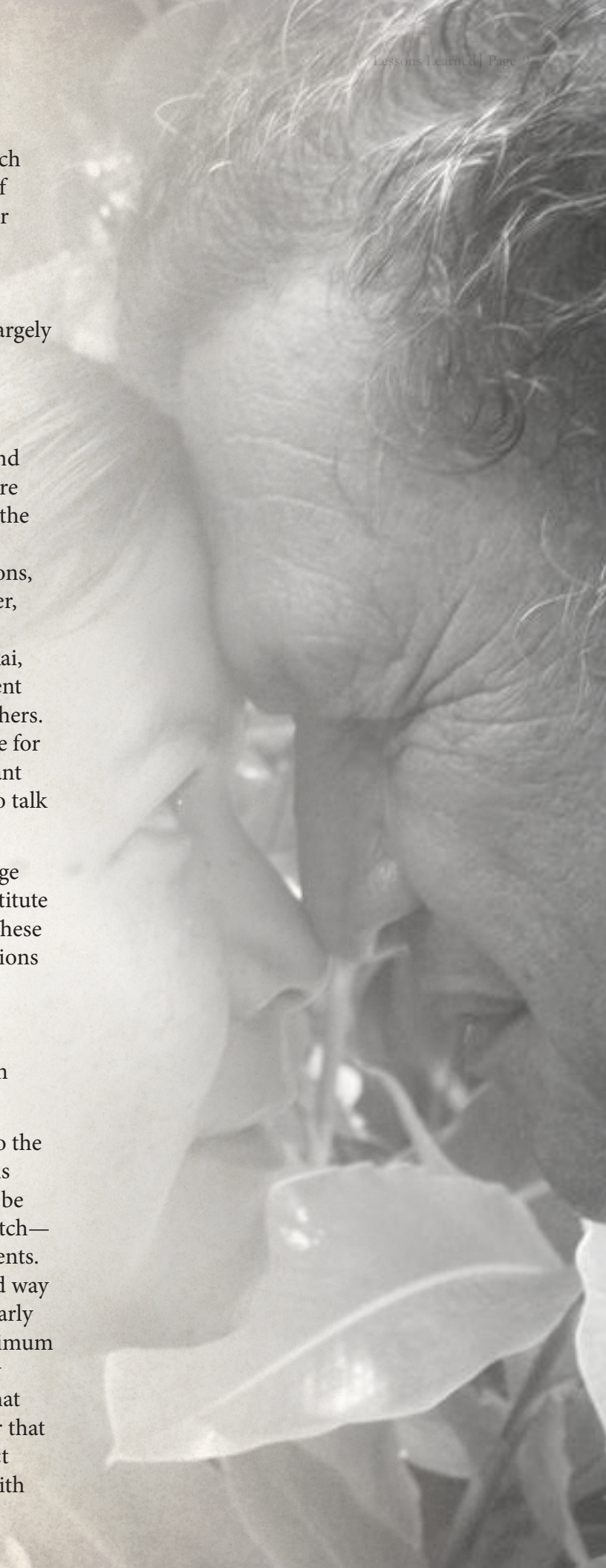
Pono Engagement

The Molokai community has a particular manner in which it requires to be engaged by outside groups. Regardless of the nature of the project, whether perceived as positive or negative, as threatening or furthering community goals, our community requires a high degree of transparency, involvement, and a seat at the decision-making table. In general, the process for community engagement is also largely predefined and mimics cultural values and protocols.

As there can be an endless variation of project types, it is recommended that outside entities secure a trusted local consultant who is well versed in community dynamics and processes to help guide the project. Furthermore, there are key local groups that should be contacted depending on the project's location and area of potential impact including, the 'Aha Kiolo o Molokai, Molokai Homestead Associations, Hui Mālama o Mo'omomi, The Hawaiian Learning Center, Kahinapohaku Fishpond, Ka Honua Momona, Molokai Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Molokai, Kawela Plantations Homeowners Association, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Kamehameha Schools, and others. There are also cultural practitioners and kūpuna that care for different areas throughout the island. Your local consultant should be aware of the appropriate groups and kūpuna to talk story with.

Below are a few general guidelines when seeking to engage with the Molokai community, however, they do not substitute for project-specific consultation and kūpuna guidance. These guidelines are meant specifically to encourage collaborations between scientists, resource managers, and residents to collectively address climate change threats and impacts. However, many of the recommendations are universally applicable to any outside entity wishing to do business on Molokai.

►►► Publicly announce your intentions or project idea to the Molokai community in its initial phase before any actions have been taken. A recommended format for this would be placing an article or advertisement in the Molokai Dispatch—Molokai's only printed newspaper which is free for residents. Notices on all community bulletin boards are also a good way to get the word out. In addition, a community meeting early on will signify the outside entity is proceeding with maximum transparency. This initial introduction of the community to a project idea is critical. If the community perceives that significant action has occurred without its knowledge, or that the entity is not approaching the community with respect and good intentions it can tinge the rest of the process with distrust.



►►► Common locations for community meetings include Kūlana ‘Ōiwi, Kalanianaʻole Hall, and Mitchel Pauole Center. At times, it may be appropriate to host a series of island-wide meetings which might include a meeting at Maunaloa Elementary School (Maunaloa), Kilohana Community Center (Mana‘e), and Lanikeha (Ho‘olehua), in addition to the Kaunakakai meeting.

►►► The term “Community Meeting” is very specific and means that notice and an invitation to the meeting has gone out to all residents and that residents were allowed to openly ask questions and voice their concerns at the meeting. A meeting that is not open to the public is better termed a focus group or workshop. In most instances these types of invitation-only meetings do not satisfy the community engagement component.

►►► An ultimate commitment to not proceed with the project if it is not in alignment with the community’s wishes is essential. As is an agreed upon understanding of how the community’s consent will be determined.

►►► Note of Caution: As mentioned earlier an attitude of deference to the people of a place— especially to kūpuna, community leaders, and cultural practitioners—is critical. Where western scientific best practices conflict with cultural and community values, the later must take precedence. This sometimes occurs in the stewardship of knowledge, information, or data. For example, a kūpuna practitioner may not be permitted to disclose his methods of calculating fish populations due to the rigorous cultural protocols that govern traditional knowledge transmission. It may be safely assumed that his methods are at the very least equal, and quite likely superior, to modern scientific methods.

►►► Another area where conflict can arise is in safeguarding intellectual property rights. This is especially sensitive when capturing ancient mo‘olelo, kūpuna oral histories, or traditional chants/songs/‘ōlelo no‘eau. There are a variety of ways that this ‘ike, traditional knowledge, can be captured including audio or video recordings, written documentation, embedded in curriculum, published as a book, posted to a website or social media site, etc. At no point should stewardship of this knowledge or any part of the decision-making process be divorced from its source—the kūpuna or practitioner who shared their ‘ike. Extra caution must be exercised when dealing with copyright or publishing rights.

►►► Whenever possible, data about an area should belong to the people who are stewards of that place. Efforts that work with local resource managers and residents to encourage community-based research and data collection are highly encouraged.

►►► Finally, “do your homework” before approaching the Molokai community. Find out more about the areas that might be impacted by your project. Learn about the historical and contemporary efforts of Molokai’s people. Talk story with others who might provide further insights. Review “Molokai: Future of a Hawaiian Island,” our community’s vision for itself based on more than thirty years of community planning.

Hō'i I Ka Pono

E iho ana o luna

That which is above shall fall

E pi'i ana o lalo

That which is below shall rise up

E hui ana nā moku

The islands shall be united

E kū ana ka paia

The walls shall stand

Ka Pi'ina

The Rising

Some say this well-known chant prophesies a time when traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples will rise to meet the challenges produced by a toppling system of western dominance and environmental disregard.

If the land is a reflection of the people that inhabit it, then surely climate change is only a symptom of humankind's rapidly changing values and lifestyles over the past century. Modern advances and technology have created an increasingly synthetic world that has resulted in an ever-widening gap between kōnaka and 'āina. Yet this is not a time for despair, but rather a time for greater awareness, and a time to return to the wisdom of our collective ancestors. A time to join together and create positive change.

As we listen to the stories of our kūpuna as they speak of how Molokai's landscape has changed over the course of their lives, we must ask ourselves, what will our children experience during the course of their lifetimes? This thought can become a beacon that guides our actions in the face of uncertain outcomes.

Stories of resiliency and hope are all around us. In the midst of the local and global changes we are faced with, we can safely cling to that which does not change—our undying aloha for the land and one another.

There is only here.

There is only now.

There is only us.

He 'ohu ke aloha, 'A'ohē kuahiwi kau 'ole.

Aloha is a mist, there is no hill upon which it does not settle.

No Nā Malihini

This section is for those who are new to Hawai‘i and have not yet had the opportunity to become familiar with local customs and shared understandings. These subtle dynamics or characteristics are common throughout Hawai‘i, but perhaps especially present in rural Hawaiian communities. A glossary of some of the most commonly used Hawaiian words and phrases, including those used throughout this document, has also been included to aid the newcomer in understanding the breadth and depth of collaborative dialogues. Hawaiian words especially have multi-layered meanings and so limited definitions and/or interpretations of words and phrases have been given based on the authors’ understanding.

Ke Ano Hawai‘i

Local Customs & Dynamics

►►► It is customary for a visitor to bring a modest ho‘okupu or gift for their host. This could be a special delicacy found in the area where you live, t-shirts, food, a book. Anything that can be a token of your positive intentions and aloha. If visiting a place for the first time, ask your host if there are any protocols you should be aware of. Be sensitive to the place and to your host, take your lead from the people of that area.

►►► Unlike western value systems that encourage personal accolades, it is sometimes considered bad form to speak highly of yourself, or list your own accomplishments or that of someone close to you. Especially in rural Hawaiian communities, locals have the tendency to downplay, deflect, or dismiss their strengths and accomplishments. Ha‘aha‘a, or humility, is valued as a

cornerstone of aloha, and reflects an increased focus on elevating the collective rather than the individual experience.

►►► Ahupua‘a are traditional land divisions that run mauka (upper watershed) to makai (coast) often including fishing grounds. Ahupua‘a have also been defined as water divisions. Traditionally, people living within an ahupua‘a gathered resources only within their own area. This place-based resource access is, to a lesser degree, still reflected in residents’ attitudes and expectations. Conflicts can arise between residents and visitors to Molokai who access our islands’ resources, especially for sport or commercial purposes.

►►► Aloha ‘āina is a deep love and kinship for the ‘āina. ‘Āina is most commonly defined as land but encompasses much more. Some schools of thought define ‘āina as that which feeds us—the land, sea, sky, as well as spiritual sources of

nourishment. Our love for the land is manifested as mālama ‘āina, or stewardship.

►►► Pono is doing what is right, righteousness, to be in right order or balance with the natural world, with spirit, and with our fellow man. Actions that harm the land are considered pono ‘ole - not right. Ho‘i i ka pono is returning to balance and pono.

►►► Kuleana is both a right or privilege and a responsibility or obligation. Kuleana is both personal and collective. It is our obligation to the land, our family, our ancestors, our community, and to future generations. A strong sense of kuleana leads to pono action.

►►► Loko i‘a, or traditional Hawaiian fishponds are only found in Hawai‘i. There are many types of loko i‘a, Loko kuapā are built on the reef and enclosed with drystack walls of rocks. The two ponds KHM cares for were both built in the 15th century.

Hawaiian Vocabulary

kupuna/kūpuna - elder(s)	momona - abundance	‘ike - knowledge
makua/mākua - adult(s)	mālama - to care for, protect, steward	
keiki - child	Ka Pae ‘Aina o Hawai‘i - The Hawaiian Archipelago	
‘opio/ ‘ōpio - youth	moku - district or island	
lani - heavens, sky	honua - earth, world	
kai - ocean, sea	ha‘aha‘a - humility, humbleness	
kahakai - shore	kanaka/kānaka - man, men	
	general term for human/humankind.	



Mahalo Nui

E Ola Mau Moloka'i.

May Molokai's heritage be perpetuated.



PACIFIC ISLANDS
CLIMATE CHANGE COOPERATIVE